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A RE-PRODUCTION OF ALL DR. THOMAS'S WORKS.

THE GENIUS OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

VI.

THE
GENIUS OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN,
Exegetically and Practically Considered,

CONTAINING

ONE HUNDRED AND TWO HOMILETIC SKETCHES

AND

FIFTY-ONE GERMS OF THOUGHT.

✓ BY
DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

AUTHOR OF

"THE GENIUS OF THE FIRST GOSPEL (MATTHEW)," "COMMENTARY ON PSALMS," "PROBLEMATA
MUNDI," "PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHER," ETC., ETC.

VOL. I.

EXTENDING FROM CHAPTER I. TO XIII.

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Collect.

" Merciful Lord, we beseech Thee to cast Thy bright beams of light upon Thy Church, that it, being enlightened by the doctrine of Thy blessed Apostle and Evangelist St. John, may so walk in the light of Thy truth, that it may at length attain to the light of everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord ! "

THE AUTHOR'S CREED

AS EVOLVED FROM THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

Faith.

Not in Priesthoods, not on Creed,
Is the Faith we need, O Lord!
These, more fragile than the reed,
Can no rest for souls afford.
Human systems, what are they?
Dreams of erring men at best;
Visions only of a day,
Without substance, without rest.

Firmly fix it, Lord, on Thee,
Strike its roots deep in Thy love;
Growing ever may it be,
Like the Faith of those above.
Then, though earthly things depart,
And the heavens pass away,
Strong in Thee shall rest the heart,
Without fainting or decay.

Hope.

Not on heaven, not on bliss,
Should, O Lord, our hope be set;
Not on better worlds than this,
Worlds that we might wish to get.
We would hope for goodness, Lord,
Virtue mirrored out in Thee,
Beaming ever in Thy Word,
Fighting up eternity.

Self-oblivious hope we need,
Hope that springs from love to Thee,
Free from every sordid greed,
From all selfish longings free.
Fix our hope on Thee, O Lord,
On Thy likeness and Thy love,
This we know from Thy blest Word,
Is the hope that reigns above.

Charity.

Not on creatures high or low,
Not on kindred e'en the best,
Not on Thee, O Lord, we know,
Should our chief affection rest.
Could our souls in love embrace,
All the spirits dear to Thee,
Though they clasp'd all worlds in space,
Empty, Lord, they still would be!

Oh, 'tis needful, it is right
We should set our love on Thee;
Loving Thee with all our might,
Makes the spirit strong and free.
This is love that fills the heart,
Finds our powers full employ;
Breathes new life through every part,
Floods the soul with heavenly joy.

PROEM.

"THE GOSPEL OF JOHN IS BIBLE ENOUGH FOR ME." I am disposed to echo this, although, at the same time, far enough from thinking that it is the whole of the Bible.

Who was the author of this Gospel? Where, When, and Wherefore was it written? These questions, though rather speculative than *vital*, will be found discussed at the close of the Second Volume. No candid reader can peruse these volumes of mine, without finding that the LIFE recorded in this Gospel, the doctrines propounded, and the thoughts suggested, are sufficient in every way to meet the intellectual and spiritual exigencies of mankind. It has been said, that Christianity has no rudimental idea, either in religion or ethics, that is not found in connection with the teachings of Zoroaster, Buddha, Mahomet, Confucius, Seneca, Plato, and other ancient schools of spiritual thought. Were this granted, I unhesitatingly affirm that nowhere, throughout the whole domain of literature, ancient and modern, are those most vital and profound elements of truth, exhibited in forms so congruous with the reason, so fascinating to the heart, so commanding to the whole soul, as we have them in this Gospel of St. John. In this Logos they centre and radiate.

Some of the religious writers of the distant past emblematically represented this Gospel as the "*Eagle*." So piercing is it in its vision, so broad in its sweep, so lofty in its flight, and withal so inspiring the sunny azure through which, with unrestricted

freedom, it disports its pinions, that it may well be represented by the imperial bird.

Whilst I am increasingly convinced that the Four Gospels (notwithstanding certain discrepancies and apparent inaccuracies that may, peradventure, be found therein) contain the supreme Word of God, the "Word made Flesh," yet I think that, comparing them one with another, its phase in St. John is the most complete and spiritually educational. It suggests to me that the Christ exhibited in our Creeds, Churches, and Institutions, is as unlike the Christ of the Gospels, as the mechanical force of the manufacturing machine, throwing off commodities for trade, is unlike that vital energy in nature, that clothes the landscape with verdure, and fills the earth and the waters with countless tribes of life.

I am tempted to suppose that but few men of reflective minds, and honest purpose, will go through all I have written on this Book, and not conclude that John's Gospel is pre-eminently the field for preachers,—supplying themes not only of boundless variety, but of that soul-quickenings, developing, and ennobling force, that can be found, not only nowhere else in the domain of general literature, but nowhere else in the book men call the Bible.

Christ is my Bible. And here, in the Gospel of John, I find Him in aspects that rouse my faculties and touch my heart, more intensely than when He appears to me elsewhere,—even in the Synoptic Gospels. Why preachers should be so untrue to their mission, and so indifferent to the paramount interests of humanity, as to preach their little creeds rather than this Christ, fills me often with amazement and with sore distress. Souls are everywhere crying out for the True "BREAD," and pulpits everywhere—with but few exceptions—are dealing out their little *theories* of this, the *Staff of soul-life*.

Some preachers (not a few, it has been said) habitually go to the Old Testament in quest of themes for pulpit discourse, and that because they find there so much of the sensational, always popular amongst the more sensuous and unthinking. I deplore this, not because I object to ministers selecting themes for lessons of usefulness anywhere,—from the history of nature or the history of man,—but because as a *habit*, it Judaizes men's thoughts. Is conventional Christianity much better than Judaism? I trow not. Are not its prevalent ideas of priesthood more Aaronic than Christly, of kingdom, more Davidic than Divine?

By universal consent the Scriptures of the Jewish people have obtained an unwarranted power in Christendom; and by the concurrent judgment of ever-multiplying thinkers, that power must wane, as the Christ of the Gospels becomes more and more manifest to men.

Some years ago I published a Homiletic Commentary on the *First Gospel*, under the title of *The Genius of the Gospel*. That having run through numerous editions, is now out of print. But it will in due course be re-published in this *Homilistic Library*. Should life be preserved, my articles on Mark and Luke will also appear in a short time. Thus my thinkings, such as they are, on the Four Gospels will be complete.

An Introduction, including a history of the Discussions relating to the Authenticity of this Gospel, Analysis of its Contents, etc., will be found at the close of the Second Volume; also a full *Index* of all the topics treated in this work.

DAVID THOMAS.

EREWYN, UPPER TULSE HILL,
LONDON.
October 1885.

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| II. THE SPECIAL AFFECTION OF THE FATHER. | IV. THE SPECIAL PREROGATIVES OF THE FATHER. |

No. XXXII.

CHRIST'S VINDICATION OF HIMSELF.

(No. 2.)—THE PROOF OF HIS AUTHORITY.

CHAP. V. 31-47 *Pages 134 to 139.*

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| I. HIS ABSOLUTE DEVOTION TO THE ETERNAL WILL. | II. HIS AUTHENTICATION FROM THE ETERNAL HIMSELF. |
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No. XXXIII.

THE BENEFICENCE OF CHRIST.

CHAP. VI. 1-14 *Pages 141 to 146.*

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| I. HIS BENEFICENCE IS A POWERFUL ELEMENT OF ATTRACTION IN HIS CHARACTER. | IV. HIS BENEFICENCE ALLOWS NO ENCOURAGEMENT TO WASTEFULNESS. |
| II. HIS BENEFICENCE WAS EVER INSPIRED BY THE TENDEREST COMPASSION. | V. HIS BENEFICENCE IS A CONVINCING TESTIMONY OF HIS MESSIAHSHIP. |
| III. HIS BENEFICENCE TRANSCENDS BOTH THE FAITH AND NEEDS OF MAN. | |

No. XXXIV.

MAN AND CHRIST.

CHAP. VI. 15-21 *Pages 147 to 151.*

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| I. MEN VULGARLY ESTIMATING CHRIST. | III. MEN IGNORANTLY DREADING CHRIST. |
| II. MEN CONSCIOUSLY NEEDING CHRIST. | IV. MEN CORDIALLY WELCOMING CHRIST. |

No. XXXV.

MAN AND CHRIST.

CHAP. VI. 22-27 Pages 152 to 155.

I. MAN WRONGLY SEEKING CHRIST.

1. *Seeking Him through curiosity.*
2. *Seeking Him through greed.*

2. *Soul food requires the chief labour of man.*3. *Soul food is the gift of Christ.*

II. CHRIST RIGHTLY DIRECTING MEN.

1. *Soul food is provided for men.*

No. XXXVI.

EVANGELICAL FAITH.

CHAP. VI. 28, 29 Pages 156 to 159.

I. EVANGELICAL FAITH IS FAITH IN THE PERSONAL CHRIST.

1. *As the highest Embodiment of Divine excellence.*
2. *As the faithful Revealer of the great God.*
3. *As the only Redeemer of mankind.*

II. FAITH IN THE PERSONAL CHRIST IS THE PARAMOUNT WORK OF MANKIND.

1. *It is binding on all men.*
2. *It is performable by all men.*
3. *It is indispensable to all men.*

No. XXXVII.

A TWOFOLD MANIFESTATION.

CHAP. VI. 30-36 Pages 159 to 162.

I. THE MANIFESTATION OF THE DEPRIVITY OF MEN.

1. *Their ingratitude.*
2. *Their ignorance.*
3. *Their unspirituality.*
4. *Their folly.*

II. A MANIFESTATION OF THE MERCY OF GOD.

1. *In the bestowment of a transcendent gift.*
2. *In the simplicity of the condition on which the personal enjoyment of the gift depends.*

No. XXXVIII.

CHRIST IN RELATION TO THE ABSOLUTE WILL.

CHAP. VI. 37-40 Pages 162 to 165.

I. CHRIST REVEALS HIMSELF TO MAN IN RELATION TO THE DIVINE WILL.

1. *He had a thorough knowledge of it.*
2. *He had unbounded confidence in it.*
3. *He cordially acquiesced in it.*
4. *He absolutely obeyed it.*

II. CHRIST REVEALS TO THE WORLD THE DIVINE WILL IN RELATION TO HUMANITY.

1. *God wills that we should be everlastingly happy through Him.*
2. *God wills that they should recover everything that was lost through Him.*

No. XXXIX.

THE TENDENCY OF UNBELIEF.

CHAP. VI. 41-47 Pages 167 to 172.

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| <p>I. THE TENDENCY OF UNBELIEF.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>It is fearfully prevalent.</i> 2. <i>It is philosophically absurd.</i> 3. <i>It is morally reprehensible.</i> 4. <i>It is spiritually pernicious.</i> <p>II. THE DIVINITY OF CHRISTIANITY.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>God sends His Son to man.</i> 2. <i>God brings man to His Son.</i> | <p>III. THE PRE-EMINENCE OF JESUS.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>All souls truly influenced will come to Him.</i> 2. <i>No one but Christ has absolute knowledge of the Father.</i> <p>IV. THE WELL-BEING OF HUMANITY.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The nature of man's well-being.</i> 2. <i>The condition of man's well-being.</i> |
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No. XL.

CHRIST AS A DIVINE GIFT TO THE WORLD.

CHAP. VI. 48-58 Pages 172 to 175.

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| <p>I. A SPECIAL GIFT FROM THE FATHER.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>He is the greatest Personality in the universe.</i> 2. <i>He is the dearest Personality to God in the universe.</i> <p>II. A FREE GIFT OF SELF.</p> | <p>III. AN INDISPENSABLE GIFT FOR MEN.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>There is no spiritual life without it.</i> 2. <i>This spiritual life is identical with that of God and Christ.</i> 3. <i>This spiritual life includes man's well-being for ever.</i> |
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No. XLI.

GOSPEL REVELATION.

CHAP. VI. 59-65 Pages 179 to 182.

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| <p>I. SENSUOUSLY INTERPRETED.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>This interpretation involved men in difficulty.</i> 2. <i>This interpretation subjected men to unbelief.</i> 3. <i>This interpretation was offensive to Christ.</i> <p>II. DIVINELY EXPLAINED.</p> | <p>III. PRACTICALLY DISBELIEVED.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Disbelievers are known to Christ from the commencement.</i> 2. <i>Disbelievers are capable of iniquitous conduct.</i> 3. <i>Disbelievers maintain a moral distance from Christ.</i> |
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No. XLII.

THE TRANSCENDENT WORTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

CHAP. VI. 66-71 Pages 183 to 185.

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| <p>I. CHRISTIANITY PROVIDES FOR THE COMPLETE WELL-BEING OF HUMAN NATURE.</p> <p>II. CHRISTIANITY RESPECTS THE FREEDOM OF HUMAN NATURE.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Christ does not want our service.</i> 2. <i>Christ will not accept forced service.</i> | <p>III. CHRISTIANITY TAKES THE STRONGEST HOLD UPON HUMAN NATURE.</p> <p>IV. CHRISTIANITY REJECTS NOT THE WORST TYPES OF HUMAN NATURE.</p> |
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No. XLIII.

INFIDELITY.

CHAP. VII. 1-10 Pages 186 to 189.

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| I. IT SELDOM LACKS EVIDENCE.

II. IT IS ALWAYS VAIN. | III. IT IS EVER IN AGREEMENT WITH THE WORLD.

IV. IT NEVER THWARTS THE DIVINE PURPOSE. |
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No. XLIV.

CHRIST'S FIRST TWO DISCOURSES AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

(No. I.)—GREAT CONTRASTS.

CHAP. VII. 11-18 Pages 190 to 192.

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| I. BASE COWARDICE AND SUBLIME COURAGE. | II. CONVENTIONAL SCHOLARSHIP AND GENUINE INTELLIGENCE. |
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No. XLV.

CHRIST'S FIRST TWO DISCOURSES AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

(No. 2.)—MURDER IN DESIRE.

CHAP. VII. 19-30 Pages 193 to 198.

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| I. THE DESIRE TO KILL CHRIST WAS INCONSISTENT WITH THEIR RELIGIOUS PROFESSION.
1. <i>The spirit of their opposition was inconsistent with the moral law of Moses.</i>
2. <i>The proximate cause of their opposition was inconsistent with the moral law of Moses.</i> | 2. <i>Another error was that a ritualistic religion was a religion of righteousness.</i>
3. <i>The other error was that by killing a teacher they would kill his influence.</i> |
| II. THE DESIRE TO KILL CHRIST IMPLIED GREAT ERROR OF JUDGMENT.
1. <i>One error was that a mere ordinary peasant had no Divine mission.</i> | III. THIS DESIRE TO KILL CHRIST INVOLVED THEM IN PERPLEXITY.
1. <i>Christ knows the Absolute.</i>
2. <i>Christ was a Messenger from the Absolute.</i> |
| | IV. THIS DESIRE TO KILL CHRIST WAS DIVINELY RESTRAINED. |

No. XLVI.

CHRIST'S FIRST TWO DISCOURSES AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

(No. 3.)—MEN IN RELATION TO CHRIST.

CHAP. VII. 31-36 Pages 200 to 203.

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| I. THOSE WHO WERE FAVOURABLY DISPOSED.
1. <i>Their favourable disposition towards Him was grounded upon facts.</i>
2. <i>Their favourable disposition towards Him intensified the opposition of His enemies.</i> | II. THOSE WHO WERE MALIGNANTLY OPPOSED.
1. <i>They were to be deprived of the fellowship of Christ.</i>
2. <i>They would vainly seek the help of Christ.</i>
3. <i>They misunderstood the meaning of Christ.</i> |
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No. XLVII.

CHRIST'S FIRST TWO DISCOURSES AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

(No. 4.)—THE TRANSCENDENT PHILANTHROPIST.

CHAP. VII. 37-39 Pages 203 to 206.

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| <p>I. CHRIST OFFERS MEN THE HIGHEST BLESSING.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>A Divinely refreshing influence.</i> 2. <i>A Divinely refreshing influence that would roll through the centre of human nature.</i> 3. <i>A Divinely refreshing influence that only came in its plenitude after the ascension of Christ.</i> | <p>II. CHRIST OFFERS MEN THE HIGHEST BLESSING WITH INTENSE EARNESTNESS.</p> <p>III. CHRIST OFFERS MEN THE HIGHEST BLESSING ON THE EASIEST CONDITION.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Faith in a proposition that is obviously true is one of the easiest acts of the mind.</i> 2. <i>Faith in a person that is obviously good is easier still.</i> |
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No. XLVIII.

CHRIST'S FIRST TWO DISCOURSES AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

(No. 5.)—DIFFERENT IMPRESSIONS PRODUCED BY CHRIST'S TEACHING.

CHAP. VII. 40-53 Pages 206 to 210.

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| <p>I. IT PRODUCED A VAST VARIETY OF OPINIONS CONCERNING HIM.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The great diversity in the minds of men.</i> 2. <i>The moral perversity in the souls of men.</i> 3. <i>The intellectual freedom which Christ allows men.</i> | <p>II. IT PRODUCED A PROFOUND IMPRESSION AS TO HIS TRANSCENDENT WORTH.</p> <p>III. IT PRODUCED A DEADLY HOSTILITY TOWARDS HIM.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Intolerance.</i> 2. <i>Superciliousness.</i> 3. <i>Insolence.</i> 4. <i>Ridicule.</i> 5. <i>Humiliation.</i> |
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No. XLIX.

CHRIST AS A RELIGIOUS TEACHER.

CHAP. VIII. 1, 2 Pages 211 to 216.

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| <p>I. HE WAS AS A TEACHER DEVOUTLY STUDIOUS.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Self-formed convictions of Gospel truth.</i> 2. <i>Unconquerable love for Gospel truth.</i> 3. <i>A living expression of Gospel truth.</i> <p>II. HE WAS AS A TEACHER SUB-
LIMELY COURAGEOUS.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Brute courage is dead to the sacredness of life.</i> 2. <i>Brute courage is indifferent to the grand mission of life.</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. <i>Brute courage is always inspired by mere animal passion.</i> <p>III. HE WAS A TEACHER EARNESTLY DILIGENT.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>He felt the transcendent importance of His mission.</i> 2. <i>He felt the brevity of His life.</i> <p>IV. HE WAS AS A TEACHER BEAUTIFULLY NATURAL.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>He was natural in attitude.</i> 2. <i>He was natural in expression.</i> 3. <i>He was natural in tones.</i> |
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No. L.

THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY.

CHAP. VIII. 3-11 Pages 216 to 220.

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| <p>I. THE VILEST SINNERS ARE OFTEN THE GREATEST ACCUSERS.</p> <p>II. THE SEVEREST JUDGE OF SINNERS IS THEIR OWN CONSCIENCE.</p> <p>1. <i>Christ's method of awakening conscience.</i></p> <p>2. <i>The force of awakened consciences.</i></p> | <p>III. THE GREATEST FRIEND OF SINNERS IS JESUS CHRIST.</p> <p>1. <i>He declines to pronounce a judicial condemnation.</i></p> <p>2. <i>He discharges with a merciful admonition.</i></p> |
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No. LI.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

CHAP. VIII. 12' Pages 220 to 222.

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| <p>I. CHRIST AS A LIGHT IS WONDERFULLY REVEALING.</p> <p>II. CHRIST AS A LIGHT IS HUMANITY-GUIDING.</p> | <p>III. CHRIST AS A LIGHT IS SPIRITUALLY QUICKENING.</p> |
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No. LII.

CHRIST'S SUPERHUMAN CLAIM.

CHAP. VIII. 13-19 Pages 222 to 225.

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| <p>I. DENIED BY THE PHARISEES.</p> <p>1. <i>The denial was somewhat natural.</i></p> <p>2. <i>The reason for the denial was somewhat absurd.</i></p> <p>II. VINDICATED BY CHRIST.</p> <p>1. <i>His assertion is true, independent of any witness.</i></p> | <p>2. <i>Their judgment on the question was carnal.</i></p> <p>3. <i>His assertion was backed by the testimony of the Eternal Father</i></p> <p>4. <i>They were in utter ignorance of His Father and Himself.</i></p> |
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No. LIII.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

CHAP. VIII. 20 Pages 226 to 228.

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| <p>I. IT EXERTS A RESTRAINING POWER ON WICKED MEN.</p> <p>1. <i>It is not always a matter of consciousness.</i></p> <p>2. <i>It interferes not with human freedom.</i></p> | <p>3. <i>It is an incalculable advantage to the race.</i></p> <p>II. IT HAS SETTLED PERIODS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EVENTS.</p> |
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No. LIV.

CHRIST AND MEN.

CHAP. VIII. 21 Pages 228 to 229.

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| <p>I. THE WITHDRAWMENT OF CHRIST FROM MEN.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Christ had a "Way."</i> 2. <i>Christ pursued His "Way" voluntarily.</i> | <p>II. THE FRUITLESS SEEKING OF CHRIST BY MEN.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>This fruitless seeking is possible.</i> 2. <i>This fruitless seeking is lamentable.</i> <p>III. THE ETERNAL SEPARATION OF CHRIST FROM MEN.</p> |
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No. LV.

ASPECTS OF UNBELIEF.

CHAP. VIII. 22-24 Pages 229 to 231.

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| <p>I. THE PERVERSITY OF UNBELIEF.</p> | <p>2. <i>The character of one man may be so different to another, as to constitute different worlds.</i></p> |
| <p>II. THE DEGRADATION OF UNBELIEF.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The world in which a man lives is his character.</i> | <p>III. THE DISASTROUSNESS OF UNBELIEF.</p> |

No. LVI.

CHRIST'S TEACHING.

CHAP. VIII. 25-27 Pages 235 to 237.

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| <p>I. IT IS CONSISTENT.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Notwithstanding the trying circumstances under which He spoke.</i> 2. <i>Notwithstanding the diversity in the minds and circumstances of those who reported His utterances.</i> | <p>II. IT IS PROGRESSIVE.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>It supplies a motive to stimulate human enquiry.</i> 2. <i>It shows His suitability as a Teacher for mankind.</i> <p>III. IT IS DIVINE.</p> <p>IV. IT IS NOT ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD.</p> |
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No. LVII.

CHRIST FORECASTING HIS DEATH AND DESTINY.

CHAP. VIII. 28, 29 Pages 237 to 240.

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| <p>I. HIS SUBLIME HEROISM IN THE PROSPECT OF A TERRIBLE DEATH.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>His crucifixion was the culmination of human wickedness.</i> 2. <i>His crucifixion was the culmination of human suffering.</i> | <p>3. <i>He was not doubtful of ultimate success.</i></p> |
| <p>II. HIS UNSHAKEN FAITH IN THE TRIUMPH OF HIS CAUSE.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>He was not discouraged by apparent failure.</i> 2. <i>He did not despair of man's improbability.</i> | <p>III. A PRINCIPLE OF CONDUCT COMMON IN ALL HISTORY.</p> <p>IV. A CONSCIOUSNESS OF PECULIAR RELATIONSHIP TO THE ETERNAL FATHER.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Christ was His Pupil.</i> 2. <i>Christ was His Companion.</i> 3. <i>Christ was His Servant.</i> |

No. LVIII.

GENUINE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP.

CHAP. VIII. 30-32 Pages 240 to 242.

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| <p>I. IT GROWS OUT OF A PRACTICAL CONTINUANCE IN CHRIST'S WORD.</p> <p>1. <i>Some never enter it.</i></p> <p>2. <i>Some enter only as passing visitors.</i></p> | <p>II. IT QUALIFIES FOR A RIGHT APPRECIATION OF DIVINE TRUTH.</p> <p>III. IT ENSURES THE ENJOYMENT OF PERFECT LIBERTY.</p> |
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No. LIX.

MORAL BONDAGE.

CHAP. VIII. 33-36 Pages 243 to 246.

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| <p>I. THE SUBJECTS OF IT ARE UNCONSCIOUS OF IT.</p> <p>II. THE SUBJECTS OF IT ARE THE AUTHORS OF IT.</p> | <p>III. THE SUBJECTS OF IT CAN BE DELIVERED FROM IT.</p> |
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No. LX.

THE PRIMAL PARENTS OF MORAL CHARACTER.

CHAP. VIII. 37-44 Pages 246 to 250.

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| <p>I. THE ANCESTRY OF A MAN'S CHARACTER IS MORE IMPORTANT TO HIM THAN THAT OF HIS CORPOREAL EXISTENCE.</p> <p>1. <i>A man is responsible for his moral parentage, and not for his corporeal.</i></p> <p>2. <i>Corporeal existence will prove an intolerable curse, if the character is bad.</i></p> <p>3. <i>Moral character survives corporeal existence.</i></p> <p>II. IN THE ANCESTRY OF CHARACTER THERE ARE TWO PRIMAL PROGENITORS.</p> <p>1. <i>They are personal existences.</i></p> | <p>2. <i>They are morally antagonistic.</i></p> <p>III. EVERY MAN'S PRIMAL MORAL ANCESTOR IS DEMONSTRATED BY HIS LIFE.</p> <p>1. <i>A man of falsehood is a child of the devil, a man of truth a child of God.</i></p> <p>2. <i>A man of malice is a child of the devil, a man of love a child of God.</i></p> <p>3. <i>A man hating Christ is a child of the devil, a man loving Christ a child of God.</i></p> |
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No. LXI.

THE RATIONALE OF UNBELIEF.

CHAP. VIII. 45-48 Pages 250 to 253.

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| <p>I. REPUGNANCE TO THE TRUTH.</p> <p>1. <i>This reveals man's abnormal condition.</i></p> <p>2. <i>This suggests man's awful future.</i></p> <p>II. THE PURITY OF CHRIST.</p> | <p>III. ESTRANGEMENT FROM GOD.</p> <p>IV. PRIDE OF INTELLECT.</p> <p>V. UNCHARITABLENESS OF DISPOSITION.</p> |
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No. LXII.

THE ANTI-DIABOLISM OF CHRIST.

CHAP. VIII. 48-51 Pages 253 to 255.

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| <p>I. CHRIST HONOURS THE FATHER,
THE DEVIL DOES NOT.</p> <p>1. <i>By a faithful representation of
the Father's character.</i></p> <p>2. <i>By a supreme devotion to the
Father's will.</i></p> | <p>II. CHRIST SEEKS NOT HIS OWN
GLORY, THE DEVIL DOES.</p> <p>III. CHRIST DELIVERS FROM DEATH,
THE DEVIL CANNOT.</p> |
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No. LXIII.

CHRIST GREATER AND OLDER THAN ABRAHAM.

CHAP. VIII. 52-59 Pages 256 to 258.

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| <p>I. CHRIST IS GREATER THAN ABRAHAM.</p> <p>1. <i>The implied denial that Christ
was greater than Abraham.</i></p> <p>2. <i>The reply of Christ to the im-
plied denial.</i></p> | <p>3. <i>The declaration of Christ's
superiority to Abraham.</i></p> <p>II. CHRIST IS OLDER THAN ABRAHAM.</p> <p>1. <i>This sounded absurd.</i></p> <p>2. <i>This sounded blasphemous.</i></p> |
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No. LXIV.

THE MAN BORN BLIND.

TYPES OF CHARACTER IN RELATION TO CHRIST'S WORK.

(No. 1.)—THOSE WHO CONSCIOUSLY NEED CHRIST'S WORK.

CHAP. IX. 1-7 Pages 260 to 264.

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| <p>I. THE WRETCHEDNESS OF THEIR
CONDITION.</p> <p>1. <i>This man was afflicted with
blindness.</i></p> <p>2. <i>This man was afflicted with
beggary.</i></p> <p>3. <i>This man was afflicted with
social heartlessness.</i></p> | <p>II. THE NATURE OF THEIR DELIVERANCE.</p> <p>1. <i>The deliverance is the pre-deter-
mined work of God.</i></p> <p>2. <i>The deliverance was effected by
Jesus Christ.</i></p> |
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No. LXV.

THE MAN BORN BLIND.

TYPES OF CHARACTER IN RELATION TO CHRIST'S WORK.

(No. 2.)—THOSE WHO ARE ONLY SPECULATIVELY INTERESTED IN CHRIST'S WORK.

CHAP. IX. 8-13 Pages 265 to 268.

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| <p>I. THE LACK OF EARNESTNESS IN
THEIR INQUIRIES.</p> <p>1. <i>Their inquiry was confined to
the identity of the restored
man.</i></p> <p>2. <i>Their inquiry was confined to
the method of his restoration.</i></p> | <p>3. <i>Their inquiry was confined to
the whereabouts of the Re-
storer.</i></p> <p>II. THE LACK OF GENEROSITY IN
THEIR INQUIRIES.</p> <p>III. THE LACK OF INDEPENDENCY IN
THEIR INQUIRIES.</p> |
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No. LXVI.

THE MAN BORN BLIND.

TYPES OF CHARACTER IN RELATION TO CHRIST'S WORK.

(No. 3.)—THOSE WHO ARE BITTERLY PREJUDICED AGAINST CHRIST'S WORK.

CHAP. IX. 14-18 Pages 268 to 270.

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| <p>I. THEY ARE TECHNICAL RATHER THAN MORAL, IN THEIR STANDARD OF JUDGMENT.</p> <p>II. THEY ARE BIASSED RATHER THAN CANDID, IN THEIR EXAMINATION OF EVIDENCE.</p> | <p>III. THEY ARE DIVIDED RATHER THAN UNITED, IN THEIR CONCLUSIONS.</p> <p>IV. THEY ARE MALIGNANT, RATHER THAN GENEROUS, IN THEIR AIMS.</p> |
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No. LXVII.

THE MAN BORN BLIND.

TYPES OF CHARACTER IN RELATION TO CHRIST'S WORK.

(No. 4.)—THOSE WHO PRACTICALLY IGNORE CHRIST'S WORK.

CHAP. IX. 19-23 Pages 270 to 273.

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| <p>I. THEY IGNORE CHRIST'S WORK ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE EVERY OPPORTUNITY OF KNOWING IT.</p> <p>II. THEY IGNORE CHRIST'S WORK WHEN GRATITUDE SHOULD URGE THEM TO ACKNOWLEDGE IT.</p> | <p>III. THEY IGNORE CHRIST'S WORK FROM A COWARDLY MEANNESS OF SOUL.</p> |
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No. LXVIII.

THE MAN BORN BLIND.

TYPES OF CHARACTER IN RELATION TO CHRIST'S WORK.

(No. 5.)—THOSE WHO ARE CONSCIOUSLY RESTORED BY CHRIST'S WORK.

CHAP. IX. 24-38 Pages 274 to 277.

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| <p>I. MAINTAINING TRUTH IN THE FACE OF FIERCE OPPOSITION.</p> <p>1. <i>Maintaining truth in a noble spirit.</i></p> <p>2. <i>Maintaining truth by sound argument.</i></p> | <p>II. FOLLOWING CHRIST WHEN CAST OUT FROM MEN.</p> <p>1. <i>Christ sought him.</i></p> <p>2. <i>Christ revealed Himself to him.</i></p> <p>3. <i>Christ followed by him.</i></p> |
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No. LXIX.

CHRIST'S MISSION TO THE WORLD.

CHAP. IX. 39-41 Pages 277 to 280.

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| <p>I. HIS MISSION TO THE WORLD HAS TWO APPARENTLY OPPOSITE RESULTS.</p> <p>1. <i>The one result is the greatest blessing, the other the greatest curse.</i></p> | <p>2. <i>The one result is intentional, the other incidental.</i></p> <p>II. HIS MISSION TO THE WORLD IS MISINTERPRETED AND ABUSED.</p> |
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No. LXX.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

CHAP. X. 1-16	Pages 280 to 285.
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| <p>I. IT PERSECUTES A MAN ON ACCOUNT OF HIS RELIGIOUS OPINIONS.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>This is most absurd.</i> 2. <i>This is most arrogant.</i> <p>II. IT PERSECUTES A MAN ON ACCOUNT OF HIS OPINIONS, HOW-</p> | <p>EVER EXCELLENT HIS LIFE MAY BE.</p> <p>III. IT PERSECUTES A MAN ON ACCOUNT OF HIS OPINIONS, HOWEVER STRONG THE ARGUMENTS IN THEIR FAVOUR.</p> |
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| <p>I. MORAL INCORRIGIBILITY.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Here disappointment.</i> 2. <i>Here is the loss of Christ.</i> | <p>II. POSTHUMOUS USEFULNESS.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The ministry of the dead man was remembered.</i> 2. <i>The ministry of the dead man was useful.</i> |
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THE FAMILY AT BETHANY. (No. 3.)

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II. THE EXTRAORDINARY CLAIM OF CHRIST.	3. <i>From this evil He delivers on the condition of trust in Him.</i>
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1. <i>The Master is come.</i>	1. <i>Promptly.</i>
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1. <i>Undoubtedly.</i>	4. <i>Devoutly.</i>
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II. MAN'S MISINTERPRETATION OF DIVINE PHILANTHROPY.	1. <i>Unless men believe in Christ, He cannot save them.</i>
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2. <i>Christ could enlighten us, without our labour.</i>	

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| <p>I. A COMMON OCCURRENCE.</p> <p>II. A SIGNIFICANT OCCURRENCE.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Diversity in men's minds.</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. <i>The moral force of depravity.</i> 3. <i>The uncoerciveness of the Gospel.</i> 4. <i>The need of perseverance in the preacher of the Gospel.</i> |
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CAIAPHAS; OR, A GLANCE AT GOVERNMENT, HUMAN AND DIVINE.

CHAP. XI. 47-52 Pages 340 to 342.

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| <p>I. AN INIQUITOUS POLICY IN THE GOVERNMENT OF MAN.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>It was apparently adapted to the end.</i> 2. <i>It was radically wrong in principle.</i> 3. <i>It was ultimately ruinous.</i> <p>II. A STUPENDOUS FACT IN THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Christ's death does not change the mind of God in relation to man.</i> 2. <i>Christ's death does not relax the claims of law.</i> 3. <i>Christ's death does not mitigate the enormity of sin.</i> 4. <i>Christ's death does not change the necessary conditions of spiritual improvement.</i> |
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No. LXXXV.

THE CROWNING CRIME OF HUMANITY, AND THE MANIFOLD ASPECTS OF WICKEDNESS.

CHAP. XI. 53-57

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I. THE CROWNING CRIME OF HUMANITY.

1. *Christ's murder was sanctioned by religion.*
2. *Christ's murder was pursued with deliberation.*
3. *Christ's murder was delayed by Himself.*

II. THE MANIFOLD ASPECTS OF WICKEDNESS.

1. *Wretched superstition.*
2. *Profane curiosity.*
3. *Organized malice.*

No. LXXXVI.

THE TRUE CHURCH.

CHAP. XII. 1-11

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I. ITS INTERNAL ASPECT.

1. *Christ as the central Figure.*
2. *A variety of guests.*
3. *The presence of an incongruous character.*

4. *The display of genuine devotion.*

II. ITS EXTERNAL INFLUENCE.

1. *Some were attracted by curiosity.*
2. *Some were attracted by malice.*

No. LXXXVII.

THREE CLASSES OF MEN IN RELATION TO CHRIST.

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I. THE POPULACE.

1. *They saw Divine royalty under the garb of secular meanness.*
2. *They became enraptured with the morally great for its own sake.*
3. *They felt the reality of Christ's miracle.*

II. THE DISCIPLES.

1. *They were partially informed.*
2. *They were enlightened by history.*

III. THE PHARISEES.

1. *They were bound to acknowledge the failure of all their efforts.*
2. *They were bound to acknowledge a most disagreeable fact.*

No. LXXXVIII.

MANKIND.

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I. THE MORAL CRAVING OF HUMANITY.

1. *For some one to solve their moral problems.*
2. *For some one on whom to centre supreme love.*
3. *For some one to correct the moral evils of which they are conscious.*
4. *For some one to guide rightly on the way of life.*

II. THE GRANDEST WORK OF HUMANITY.

1. *To bring men to the Only Infallible Physician.*
2. *To bring men to the Only Efficient Educator.*
3. *To bring men to the Only Qualified Redeemer.*

III. THE SUBLIMEST TYPE OF HUMANITY.

1. *Christ speaks with magnanimity in prospect of His death.*
2. *Christ speaks with triumph in prospect of His glory.*

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THE GRAIN OF WHEAT: CHRISTLINESS.

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1. *Christ's sacrifice is represented in a symbol.*
2. *Christ's sacrifice is represented in a statement.*

II. IT IS THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST.

III. IT IS THE GUARANTEE OF BLESS-EDNESS.

1. *It involves fellowship with Christ.*
2. *It involves the highest dignity.*

No. XC.

A TWO-FOLD CRISIS.

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I. A CRISIS IN THE HISTORY OF THE SON OF GOD.

1. *This crisis was caused by mental suffering.*
2. *This crisis proved the strength of His love for humanity.*
3. *This crisis displayed the efficacy of prayer.*
4. *This crisis explains His history.*

II. A CRISIS IN THE HISTORY OF OUR FALLEN WORLD.

1. *Christ's death gives a new force to Redemptive Truth.*
2. *Christ's death gives a wider theatre to Redemptive Truth.*
3. *Christ's death gives a mightier advocacy of Redemptive Truth.*

No. XCI.

THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST.

CHAP. XII. 32-37 Pages 363 to 366.

I. AN INSTRUMENT TO ATTRACT ALL.

1. *The Cross is to draw all men.*
2. *The Cross is to draw all men to Christ.*

III. A FACT EXPLAINED BY CHRIST.

1. *Their possession of a special advantage.*
2. *This special advantage was only temporary.*
3. *The departure of their spiritual advantage would expose them to danger.*
4. *The right use of their advantage would fill them with light.*

II. AN EVENT MISUNDERSTOOD BY SOME.

1. *Some consider it as a transaction to appease Divine wrath.*
2. *Some consider it a transaction that will purchase souls.*
3. *Some consider it as the procuring cause of Divine Love.*

No. XCII.

UNBELIEF, FAITH, AND TRUSTFULNESS.

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1. *Not for the want of evidence.*
2. *Not for the want of warning.*

III. A REDEMPTIVE TRUSTFULNESS.

1. *Faith in Christ's identity with the Father.*
2. *The absence of this faith tends to a terrible doom.*

II. A COWARDLY FAITH.

1. *Here is fear of men.*
2. *Here is love of popularity.*

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ASPECTS OF CHRIST'S WORDS.

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CHRIST WASHING HIS DISCIPLES' FEET. (No. 1.)

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II. A GREAT CHARACTER INFINITELY CONDESCENDING.	3. <i>Christ's idea of greatness was startling even to His disciples.</i>
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II. THE NECESSITY OF SPIRITUAL CLEANSING.	3. <i>Some reject Christian consolation from a feeling of unworthiness.</i>
1. <i>It is pre-eminently the work of Christ.</i>	IV. THE RAPIDITY WITH WHICH THE SOUL CAN PASS INTO OPPOSITE SPIRITUAL MOODS.
2. <i>It extends to the whole life of man.</i>	1. <i>This power indicates the greatness of human nature.</i>
III. THE POSSIBILITY OF A RIGHT FEELING LEADING TO EVIL.	2. <i>This power shows the necessity for human reflection.</i>
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WHAT CHRIST REQUIRES OF HIS DISCIPLES.

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| <p>I. THEIR CONDUCT SHOULD BE INTELLIGENT.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>There are those who attach no meaning to Christ's works.</i> 2. <i>There are those who attach a wrong meaning to Christ's works.</i> <p>II. THEIR CONDUCT SHOULD BE CONSISTENT.</p> | <p>III. THEIR CONDUCT SHOULD BE CHRISTLY.</p> <p>IV. THEIR CONDUCT SHOULD BE HAPPY.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Christ desires the happiness of His disciples.</i> 2. <i>The doing in love of the things of His loving heart ensures true happiness.</i> |
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No. XCVIII.

A FOURFOLD THEME.

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| <p>I. A SOLEMN TRUTH.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Christ does not require from us what will out-measure our faculties.</i> 2. <i>The services that are not rendered to Christ from the heart are of no worth in His sight.</i> 3. <i>Every one that names His name should depart from evil.</i> <p>II. A LAMENTABLE FACT.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>A possibility that should lead us all to the most rigorous heart scrutiny.</i> 2. <i>Christ coerces no man into His service.</i> | <p>III. A BENEFICENT WARNING.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The warning was against a probable danger to the other disciples.</i> 2. <i>The warning would make the betrayal the means of fortifying their faith in the Messiah.</i> <p>IV. A GLORIOUS ASSURANCE.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>That Christ's faithful disciples are identified with Him.</i> 2. <i>They are identified with Christ as He is identified with His Father.</i> |
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CHRIST, HIS DISCIPLES, AND THE TRAITOR.

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| <p>I. CHRIST IN SADNESS.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The distress of intense holiness in the presence of foul depravity.</i> 2. <i>The distress of the highest benevolence in the presence of a lost soul.</i> <p>II. THE DISCIPLES IN ANXIETY.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Here is self-suspicion.</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. <i>Here is a desire to know the worst.</i> <p>III. THE TRAITOR UNMASKED.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The means of his detection.</i> 2. <i>His domination by Satan.</i> 3. <i>His defiance by Christ.</i> 4. <i>His lamentable doom.</i> |
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THREE IMPORTANT FACTS IN RELATION TO CHRIST.

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| <p>I. A PAINFUL OPPRESSION REMOVED FROM HIS HEART.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>An object of moral offence had been removed from His vision.</i> 2. <i>An obstruction to the free utterance of His love had been removed from amongst His hearers.</i> <p>II. A GLORIOUS CONSUMMATION OF THE GREAT PURPOSE OF HIS LIFE.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The true glory of a man is the realization of the Divine purpose in his life.</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. <i>The man who realizes the Divine purpose in his life, not only glorifies himself, but glorifies God also.</i> <p>III. A TENDER CONSIDERATION FOR THE COMING TRIAL OF HIS DISCIPLES.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>He prepares them by informing them of it.</i> 2. <i>He informs them of it in language of endearment.</i> |
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No. CI.

THE NEW COMMANDMENT, OR GENUINE ALTRUISM.

CHAP. XIII. 34, 35 Pages 403 to 405.

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| <p>I. IT IS A NEW THING TO THE WORLD.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>It is absolutely disinterested.</i> 2. <i>It is unmerited by merit.</i> 3. <i>It is self-sacrificing in power.</i> 4. <i>It is essentially forgiving.</i> | <p>II. IT IS A CRITERION OF DISCIPLESHIP.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>It is a simple test.</i> 2. <i>It is an infallible test.</i> 3. <i>It is a solemn test.</i> <p>III. IT IS THE PATH TO HEAVEN.</p> |
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PETER AND CHRIST.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE biography of true men is life-giving. The lives which great men—long since departed—lived on this earth, are amongst the most quickening and energizing forces of the age. Next in significance and usefulness to the life of Him Whose life “was the light of men,” are the lives of the apostles; and of all the lives of the apostles that of John is not the least adapted to interest and bless posterity.

All that we have in Scripture concerning this “beloved disciple” we may gather up under three general heads.

I. THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS EARLY LIFE. As to his *birth-place*, it was probably in a small town upon the Lake of Gennesaret, called Bethsaida. The scenery in which he was brought up was picturesque and lovely, suited well to awaken the poetry of his nature, and make on his young heart impressions of the majesty of Him Who piled up the hills around, and poured forth the sea that rolled at his feet. As to his *family*, he was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and the brother of James. His parents were not poor. The fact that his father owned a ship and employed hired servants (Mark i. 20); that his mother was among those women who contributed towards the maintenance of Jesus (Matt. xxvii. 56); and that our Lord considered John to be in a position that would enable him to take care of His mother, lead us to the conclusion that if his family were not affluent they were in easy circumstances. His mother, if not his father, was godly. She attended our Lord in His circuit through Galilee, ministered to His bodily wants, followed Him to the Cross, and brought spices for His burial. No doubt such parents gave their son an education equal to their means. It is true that in Acts iv. 13 it is said that the council perceived of Peter and John “that they were unlearned . . . men.” This means, however,

nothing more than that they had not been properly trained in schools of Talmudic theology. There are in this age narrow-minded men here in England, who consider some of our greatest scholars uneducated and unlearned because they have not been to Oxford or Cambridge.

The circumstances of his young life supplied most of the conditions of a noble character. He inherited, no doubt, a *good bodily organization*. His parents were not doomed to breathe the impure air of a pent up city. Their home was out in open nature; the fresh breezes of the hills and the sea breathed around their dwelling. Their habits were not those of self-indulgence and indolence which generate disease, nor on the other hand of hard brain work which tends to enervate the system. The work of the muscles and the limbs out upon the shore, the sea, and the field was their invigorating occupation. The child thus inheriting, what is almost essential to mental and moral greatness—a healthful frame—grew up amidst the same salutary and invigorating conditions. He breathed the same air, he sailed with his father in the skiff, and toiled with his father at the net. *His early impressions* from nature would be large and deep. Our greatness is determined by our ideas, and our ideas by our impressions. Small ideas can never make a great man, nor can great ideas grow out of small impressions. Large plants must have a deep soil. Hence some philosophers, not as I think without reason, maintain that, as a rule, a man must be brought up amidst grand scenery to have a grand soul. Be this as it may. To John's young eye nature towered in some of her most lovely and majestic aspects, and spoke, in the wail of trees, the howl of winds, and the roar of billows, strange and stirring poetry to his heart. His *religious* training, too, was undoubtedly favourable to future greatness. Whether his father was religious or not, it is clear that his mother was, notwithstanding the gust of ambition that once swept through her soul. Her services to Jesus, especially her following Him to the Cross, show that she was a woman of noble type, generous, loving, self-sacrificing, heroic. The mother, more than any other finite force, shapes the mind, moulds the character, and rules the destiny of the boy. Her sons are as clay in the plastic hands of her influence; John was trained religiously, and no doubt before he knew Jesus he had attended the ministry of the great forerunner. The fulminations of the Reformer would prepare his young heart for the serene and

sanctifying ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. This is all that we know of his life prior to his connection with Christ. Notice—

II. The COURSE OF HIS CHRISTIAN LIFE. Here we have to mark him in several capacities.

(1.) As a *disciple*. He and his brother James were called by Jesus as they were mending their nets on board their little skiff. The call was *unexpected* but *effectual* (Matt. ix. 21, 22.) As a disciple he had to learn of Jesus. He was the most privileged of them all. He was not only one of the favoured three who witnessed the transfiguration, and had to watch in Gethsemane; but he was the only one who is said to have leaned on our Lord's bosom, he is called the "*beloved disciple*." He had also the honour of taking charge of the Blessed Virgin.

(2.) As an *apostle*. He was called to this high office at the same time as the other eleven (Matt. x. 2—4). He was the youngest of the apostolic circle, the Benjamin of the twelve. His work was to preach and work miracles. Though we have but little recorded of what he did in this capacity, we may rest assured that he discharged his duties well.

(3.) As an *author*. If he wrote this wonderful gospel, he did it probably long after the destruction of Jerusalem, and after the decease of all the other apostles, about sixty years subsequent to the crucifixion of Christ. He wrote also the Epistles and the Apocalypse.

(4.) As a *bishop*. He had to superintend the Churches that had been planted in Asia Minor.

Such a life as his must have been most fruitful in stirring incidents, yet but few are recorded. It would seem from Gal. ii. 9 that he resided after the ascension of Christ in Jerusalem, where Paul finds him; there it is probable he remained until the death of our Lord's mother, which, according to Eusebius, took place A. D. 48. Some think that the great event which drew John at last from Jerusalem into Asia Minor was the death of the Apostle Paul (A. D. 65). Errors had grown up in the Church which Paul had planted, and they required the superintendence of such a bishop as John. It was during the period of his labours in Asia Minor that he was banished by one of the Roman Emperors to Patmos, in the Ægean Sea, where he wrote the Apocalypse. There on that lonely island, with the rugged aspects of nature before his eyes, and the saddening boom of the ocean in his ears, he

received those revelations from Christ which are the wonder of all ages.

It is supposed that his exile to this desolate spot took place under Domitian (A. D. 96). He died at Ephesus, in the reign of Trajan, after he had reached a very great age; some say one hundred years, others one hundred and twenty. Notice—

III. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF HIS INNER LIFE. All seem to agree that John's mind had in it much of the woman's nature: retiring rather than demonstrative; receptive rather than originaive; intuitive rather than logical; gentle and loving. One thing is certain, that love was the atmosphere of his soul after he became the disciple of Jesus Christ. The fact that his head rested on the Saviour's bosom, that Jesus is said to have loved him and committed His mother to his charge, shows that he was pre-eminently the *disciple of love*. Moreover, his writings are full of love. All his thoughts were generated in that region; every sentence he wrote was with a pen dipped in love. Tradition says that, when he had reached his extremest old age he became too feeble to walk to the meetings, and was carried to them by young men. He could no longer say much, but he constantly repeated the words, "Little children, love one another." When he was asked why he constantly repeated these words, his answer was, "Because this is the command of the Lord, and because enough is done if but this one thing is done."

Three remarks may be offered in relation to his Love.

First: His love was *capable of indignation*. We find his whole nature at one time in a flame of anger; he wished a Samaritan village to be burned up, because its inhabitants would not receive Jesus. There are passages also in his writings, especially in his epistles, which show that whilst he was a disciple of love he was a "son of thunder"—a Boanerges. He has been represented by many as a sentimental man, and has been painted as a youth of soft and effeminate features, but such was not John. There is a difference between an *angry man* and a man angry. An angry man is a man of malign, irritable temperament, whose whole nature is run to gall; but a *man angry* may be a man of the most loving nature. The Bible teaches us that there is an anger without sin. The anger of love is like fire from flint, it requires effort to bring it out, but as soon almost as it flashes it is extinct. In truth our capacity of loving is the measure of our capacity of indignation.

Genuine love has two sides, the lion as well as the lamb. The wrath most to be dreaded is the wrath of the lamb; it is oil in flames. The stronger a man's love the more you should dread his anger, for it has a depth, a virtue, a meaning, a divinity about it. Such anger is like the lightning, terrible, scathing and burning, because of the impurities of the universe. "Who is offended and I burn not?"

Secondly: His love was *divinely enlightening*. None of the apostles gave out loftier thoughts of God and Christ and immortality than John. His love bore him, as with the pinions of an eagle, into realms where he saw and heard things unknown to others. His writings are marvellous revelations of thought.

Three features distinguish his biography of Christ from those of the synoptists. It is *reflective*, *supplementary*, and *corrective*.

It is *reflective*. It does not merely record that in our Saviour's life which he saw and heard, but more, that about it which He thought and felt. He paints, as it were, the Christ as He appeared, not merely to his *outward eye*, but to his *inner soul*.

It is *supplementary*. He does not record all that the other evangelists wrote down; he omits much that they recorded, and gives more, in a form of stirring sublimity which escapes their notice, and perhaps transcends their conceptions. "Every man," says *Ebrard*, "may see the ineffable beauty of an alpine scene under the setting sun, but not every man can feel it, still less *paint* it. St. John had the nature of a living mirror which not merely received the full brightness of the Lord's glory, but could also reflect it."

His Gospel was also *corrective*. It was evidently written in order to put down the Gnostic, Labian and Judaic errors that had sprung up in the Churches. His epistles too are rich in the highest thoughts; they breathe the same spirit, throb with the same high thinking, wear the same literary features. His theology is not a thing of dry propositions, but of living realities. His loving heart saw God and he said, "God is light;" "God is love." A loving heart is the best interpreter of Divine truth; this he felt when he wrote, "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love."

"Love is blind," say some: this is a libel on this sublime affection. The more we love the more we see God—God and His universe then lie open to the loving heart. "O wonderful power of love," says *Novalis*, "organ of all spiritual knowledge, eye of the soul by which we gaze on God!"

Thirdly: His love was *sublimely heroic*. This may be inferred from the fact that he stood by the Cross when his Master was dying amidst the enraged fury of the mob. All the other disciples had fled, but John was there because he loved. He knew from experience what he said: "Perfect love casteth out fear." Love is courage; love is the essence of the truly heroic. There is a well-founded tradition concerning him which illustrates the invincible heroism of love. Clemens Alexandrinus, in his book, *τὸς ὁ σωζόμενος πλούσιος*, narrates the following: "Listen to a story, or rather to a genuine tradition of the Apostle John, which has been faithfully treasured in memory. On his return from Patmos to Ephesus, he visited the neighbouring regions to ordain bishops and organize churches. While he was engaged in exhorting and comforting the brethren in a city near Ephesus whose name is given by some, he noticed a handsome, spirited young man, toward whom he felt himself drawn so powerfully, that he turned to the bishop of the congregation, with the words, 'I commit him to you, who are witnesses of my heartfelt earnestness.' The bishop received the young man, promised to do all in his power, and John, at parting, repeated the same charge. The elder took the youth home, educated and watched over him, and finally baptized him. After he had given him this seal of the Lord, however, he abated in his solicitude and watchfulness. The young man, too early freed from restraint, fell into bad company. He was first led into lavish habits, and finally drawn on to rob travellers by night. Like a spirited steed that springs from the path, and rushes madly over a precipice, so did his vehement nature hurry him toward the abyss of destruction. He renounced all hope in the grace of God; and as he considered himself involved in the same destiny with his companions, was ready to commit some startling crime. He associated them with himself, organized a band of robbers, put himself at their head, and surpassed them all in cruelty and violence. Some time after, John's duties again called him to that city. When he had attended to all the other matters, he said to the bishop: 'Well, bishop, restore the pledge which the Saviour and I entrusted to thee, in the presence of the congregation!' The bishop at first was alarmed, supposing that John was speaking of money, and charging him with embezzlement. But when John continued: 'I demand again that young man, and the soul of my brother,' the old man sighed heavily, and with tears replied: 'He is dead!' 'Dead!'

said the disciple of the Lord ; ‘in what way did he die ?’ ‘He is dead to God,’ responded the old man ; ‘he became godless, and finally a robber. He is no longer in the Church, but with his fellows holds the fastnesses of a mountain.’ The Apostle, when he heard this, with a loud cry rent his clothing and smote his head, and exclaimed : ‘To what a keeper have I committed my brother’s soul !’ He takes a horse and a guide and hastens to the spot where the band of robbers was to be found. He is seized by their outguard ; he makes no attempt to escape, but cries out : ‘I have come for this very purpose. Take me to your captain !’ Their captain, completely armed, is waiting for them to bring him, but, recognizing John as he approached, flees, from a sense of shame. John nevertheless, forgetting his age, hastens after him with all speed, crying : ‘Why, my child, do you flee from me—from me, your father, an unarmed old man ? Have compassion on me, my child ; do not be afraid. You yet have a hope of life. I will yet give account to Christ for you. If needs be, I will gladly die for you, as Christ died for us. I will lay down my life for you. Stop ! Believe, Christ hath sent me.’ Hearing these words, he first stands still and casts his eyes upon the ground. He next throws away his arms, and commences trembling and weeping bitterly. When the old man approaches, he clasps his knees, and with the most vehement agony pleads for forgiveness, baptizing himself anew as it were with his own tears : all this time, however, he conceals his right hand. But the Apostle pledging himself with an appeal to God for his truth, that he had obtained forgiveness from the Saviour for him, implores him even on his knees, and the hand he had held back he kisses as if it were cleansed again by his penitence. He finally led him back to the Church. Here he pleaded with him, earnestly strove with him in fasting, urged him with monitions until he was able to restore him to the Church—an example of sincere repentance and genuine regeneration.”

This is true courage. Of the courageous man *Cowper* says :

“He holds no parley with unmanly fears,
Where duty bids he confidently steers,
Faces a thousand dangers at her call,
And, trusting in his God, surmounts them all.”

Here is another anecdote concerning John narrated in Dr. Ellicott’s “Commentary” which is too good to leave out. *Cassian* says : “The Blessed Evangelist was one day gently stroking a

partridge, when a young man returning from hunting asked in astonishment how a man so illustrious could spend his time in such a manner? 'What have you got in your hand?' said the Apostle. 'A bow,' said the young man. 'Why is it not strung?' 'Because if I carried it strung always it would lose the elasticity which I shall want in it when I draw the arrow.' 'Do not be angry then, my young friend, if I sometimes in this way unstring my spirit, which may otherwise lose its spring and fail at the very moment when I shall need its power.'"

THE GENIUS OF THE GOSPEL. JOHN.

No. I.

CHRIST AND GOD.

(*Preface to John's Gospel History.*—JOHN i. 1—18.)

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God."—i. 1, 2.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. — "Each Evangelist," says *Godet*, "enters upon his subject in the way which corresponds best to the spirit of his narrative. Matthew, whose purpose is to demonstrate the right of Jesus to the theocratic throne, begins with His genealogy. Mark, who compiles memorabilia, throws himself without exordium *in mediam rem*. Luke, who purposes to write a history properly so called, gives accounts to his readers of his sources, aim, and method. The prologue of John ought to be equally in keeping with the general viewpoint of his narrative. But to determine this relation, requires the profound study of that remarkable piece which, more than any other passage of our holy books, perhaps, has exercised a decisive influence on

the conception of Christianity in the Church down to our day." The first eighteen verses of this chapter constitute a prologue to the whole work. The Logos of Plato and Philo merely stood for a group of ideas. But the Logos of John stands for the real, the personal incarnate God Himself. "*In the beginning* (R. V. AT FIRST) *was the Word.*" Christ is spoken of as the Logos, the Word. The Logos absolutely, as here, and the Logos incarnate,—"*made flesh,*" &c. "*In the beginning.*" Of what? The verbal revelation of God to man? The appearance of the human race? The origin of the universe? The context indicates the last. We are here taken back into the immeasurable abysses of time, or as Augustine has it, "*the topless mount of God.*"

HOMILETICS.

The subject here is *Christ and God*, Christ as the *Eternal Revealer, Companion and Self* of God. Notice—

I.—THAT CHRIST IS THE ETERNAL REVEALER OF GOD.

"*In the beginning was the Word,*"—the Logos. A word is the revealer of the speaker. Christ here is called "**THE WORD.**" God has many words, many revealers. All the phenomena of nature, all the operations of His power, all the dispensations of His government, are His words; His revealers. But Christ is *the Logos*. He

is not *a* word, but "THE WORD." As the Revealer, this Word is distinguished—

First: By its faithfulness. Christ is the *exact* Exponent of the Divine intellect and heart. There is not the slightest shade of discrepancy. He agrees with Eternal reality; thus He is called "*the Truth*," and "the faithful and true Witness." This Word is distinguished—

Secondly: By its fulness. Other words only speak partially of God. Some give intimations of His wisdom, some of His power, some of His goodness, &c. But Christ speaks out the *whole* God. "He is the express image of His Person." "So that he that hath seen Him hath seen the Father." The Word is distinguished—

Thirdly: By its forcefulness. Human words are sometimes powerful. They are not always air; they are sometimes a force. God's words in nature are *mighty*. The Psalmist speaks of the "voice of the Lord," as "breaking the cedars," "making Lebanon bound like a young unicorn," "dividing the flames," &c., &c. But Christ is a "*Word*," infinitely more powerful. As a "*Word*" He moves and sways the moral mind of the universe; and more, He calls dead souls to life. Christ is "the power of God." He is then, the Eternal Logos.

We are here taught—

II.—THAT CHRIST IS THE ETERNAL COMPANION OF GOD.

"*And the Word was with God.*" The expression implies that He had a conscious existence distinct from the Absolute One. He was *with* Him.

First: Christ was with Him in the sense of agreement. God's volitions were His; God's thoughts His; God's aims His. There was a perfect concurrence.

Secondly: Christ was with Him in the sense of contact. Never out of His presence, living in His light, breathing His inspirations. He was in "the bosom of the Father." "I was by Him," says Wisdom, "as one brought up with Him," &c.

We are here taught—

III.—THAT CHRIST IS THE ETERNAL SELF OF GOD.

"*And the Word was God.*" This expression may, and no doubt does, mean a union with the Eternal so mysterious as to transcend all creature conception. Albeit there is a oneness which we can understand, and we can only speak of what we understand.

First: He was God in form. Deep, it would seem, in the constitution of the human soul, is the craving for some *form* of God. As He appears in the universe, He transcends the limits of human vision. Christ is the FORM He has assumed; the Form in which, in all probability, He appears to His intelligent universe as well

as to man. He brings God within the sphere of human senses, sympathies, and conceptions.

Secondly: He was God in action. Through Him the Eternal volitions are carried out and realized. He is the Actualizer of God's Eternal ideas. "The Father worketh hitherto, and I work." "The Father hath life in Himself, and hath given the Son life in Himself, that all men might honour the Son even as they honour the Father." As identical as thought is with the mind of the thinker, and speech with the life of the speaker, so is Christ with God.

No. II.

CHRIST AND THE CREATION.

"All things were made by Him: and without Him was not anything made that was (R. V. HATH BEEN) made."—i. 3.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—The old Gnostic Christians held that the world was not created by the Great God, "but by Demiurgus, a spirit descending from the Æons, which were themselves derived from the Deity." John's statement stands in direct antagonism to this. He says, "*All things were made by Him*"—the Infinite Logos—"all things." Some of the ancients said that part of the universe was made by a good, and part by an evil, principle. John's language stands opposed to this also. The work of creation is not a partnership work, it

is the product of One Being. "*All things*," organic and inorganic, animate and inanimate, material and spiritual, rational and irrational. "*And without Him was not anything made that was made.*" This covers all; whatever has been, whatever is, in the universe, sin excepted, He created. The universe had a *beginning*; it is not eternal, and it originated, not in *chance*, not in a *joint authorship*, but in the fiat of One Supreme Intelligence. Creation is ascribed to Christ in many other passages of Evangelic Writ: see Col. i. 16; Heb. i. 10, 12; Rev. iv. 11.

HOMILETICS.

From this passage we infer—

I.—THAT CHRIST IS OLDER THAN THE UNIVERSE.

The worker must be older than his productions. How old then is the universe? Who shall go back enumerating ages until he reaches the initial hour of creation? If there be any truth in geology, this little globe was in existence before man appeared as its lordly inhabitant. But its Author is older than that; He was before all time, He was in "the bosom of the Father," in the solitudes of immensity alone—alone with the Infinite. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water," &c.

The drops that swell the ocean,
The sands that girt the shore,
To measure His duration;
Their numbers have no power.

We infer from the words—

II.—THAT CHRIST IS GREATER THAN THE UNIVERSE.

As the architect is greater than his building, the author than his book, the artist than his productions, Christ is greater than the universe.

First: Greater in extent. How great is the universe in extent! Astronomers tell us that our solar system, as compared with the centres of systems that come within the view of their telescopes on a bright starry night, is as only one solitary leaf in a mighty forest. But what the strongest telescope discovers may be insignificant in proportion to that beyond the reach of vision. But Christ's being extends beyond the limits of the universe. The universe and all its parts are to Him as atoms in a boundless sea of sunbeams.

Secondly: Greater in force. What mighty forces there are in the universe, chemical, muscular, mental! But Christ's force is greater than all,—it is the breath and energy of all.

Thirdly: Greater in beauty. How lovely is the universe! Every part is crowded with beauty; it blooms in the plant, it sparkles in the mineral, the heavens and the earth are full of beauty. But all the beauty in the universe is but the effluence of His æsthetic nature, a touch of His pencil.

We infer from the words—

III.—THAT CHRIST IS OWNER OF THE UNIVERSE.

Production gives the highest right to possession! The produce of our energy we claim as our own, but what are our productions? Not creations, but combinations. The highest creature in the universe, possessing the largest amount of inventive genius and executive force, can only bring existing elements into new forms. Creatorship gives an absolute and indefeasible right to a production. Christ, therefore, *owns* the universe. "The sea is His, He made it, and His hands formed the dry land." On the same principle the universe is His, for He made it.

"Praise ye the Lord.
 Praise ye the Lord from the heavens:
 Praise Him in the heights.
 Praise ye Him, all His angels:
 Praise ye Him, all His hosts.
 Praise ye Him, sun and moon:
 Praise Him, all ye stars of light.
 Praise Him, ye heaven of heavens,
 And ye waters that be above the heavens.
 Let them praise the name of the Lord:
 For He commanded, and they were created.
 He hath also established them for ever and ever:
 He hath made a decree which shall not pass."

No. III.

CHRIST THE PRE-EMINENT AND ILLUMINATING LIFE.

"In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, (R. V. THE DARKNESS) and the darkness comprehended (R. V. APPREHENDED) it not. There was (R. V. CAME) a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to (R. V. THAT HE MIGHT) bear witness of the Light, that all men (R. V. OMIT) through him might believe. He was not that (R. V. THE) Light, but was sent to (R. V. CAME THAT HE MIGHT) bear witness of that (R. V. THE) Light."—i. 4—8.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 4.—"*In Him was life.*" The word "*life*" occurs about sixty times in the productions of John's pen. "This expression," says *Godet*, "means that the world after having passed from nothingness to being by the power of the Word, continued to draw from Him the vivifying forces necessary for its preservation and progress. After having been the root of the tree, the Logos was also its sap." "*And the life was the light of men.*" "We are led from the relation of the Word to the universe, to His relation to mankind. That which to lower beings in the scale of creation was more or less fully life, as the nature of each was more or less receptive of its power, is to the being endowed with a moral nature, and made in the divine image, the satisfaction of every moral need."—*Watkin*.

Ver. 5.—"*And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness compre-*

hended it not." "This phrase," says *Westcott*, "is a startling paradox. The light does not banish the darkness: the darkness does not overpower the light. Light and darkness coexist in the world side by side."

Ver. 6.—"*There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.*" "The name is not uncommon, but it is striking that it is given here without the usual distinctive Baptist. The writer stood to him in the relation of disciple to teacher. To him he was *the* John. A greater teacher had not then appeared, but when He did appear, former teacher and disciple alike bear witness to Him."

Ver. 7.—"*The same came for a witness.*" "This idea of witness-bearing is one of the fundamental notions of our Gospel. It is inseparable from that of faith, and correlative with it."

Ver. 8.—"*He was not that Light.*" John was the mere reflector, simply a lamp.

HOMILETICS.

From this passage we learn two things concerning Christ's Life—

I.—HIS LIFE WAS PRE-EMINENT.

"*In Him was life.*" The language seems emphatic. Is there not life in all living creatures? Why, then, should the writer single out Christ and say, "*In HIM was life?*" He means that in Christ was life in a pre-eminent sense.

First: "*In Him was life*" without beginning. Life in all existences had a commencement, but in Him it had no origin; it was an eternal entity.

Secondly: "*In Him was life*" without dependence. Life in all other living things is conditional; its support rests on things outside of itself. Not so with the life in Him; it was before the universe. Were the universe to be no more, the life in Him would continue unabated in plenitude and power.

Thirdly: "*In Him was life*" without limitation. All created life has its limits; not so with His. His is without limit. (1.) As to kind. In His life were the germs and archetype of all other life, material and spiritual. (2.) As to amount. All other life is circumscribed. In the highest creature it is scarcely more than a spark, but in Him it is an ocean of unfathomable depth and immeasurable breadth. (3.) As to communicativeness. His life was the great fountal Source of all life; He is the Fountain of all life—a Fountain ever outpouring, and eternally inexhaustible. (4.) As to duration. His life will never have a termination. "He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

II.—HIS LIFE WAS ILLUMINATING.

"*And the life was the Light of men.*" Christ's life, whatever its variety and fulness, had in all a *moral character*, for He was a moral Being. It was under the control of moral principles, and directed for moral ends. Hence His *character* in the New Testament is called "*life*." There are several things taught here concerning His life as *light*—

First: That this life was "*the Light of men.*" There are some lives that are not only like bodies opaque in themselves, but bodies incapable of reflecting light. Christ's life is the Fountain of moral light. It is to all intelligent beings in the universe what our sun is to our system. Two things are here suggested in relation to this "*Light of men.*" (1.) Man needed it. "*The light shineth in darkness.*" Humanity was in moral darkness: the darkness of depravity, guilt, and suffering. When Christ came into the world He came as a sun rising on man's dark heavens. The world never had such a Light before. Again, it is suggested—(2.) Man rejected it. "*The darkness comprehended it not*"—οὐ κατέλαβεν—did not take it in; apprehended it not. Man can shut out the material light of noontide from his house by darkening his windows, or even by closing his eyes, so men shut out this moral Light; close their eyes against it. Men were "sitting in darkness and the shadow of death," while the Light was shining above and around them "*comprehended it not.*" It is here stated again—

Secondly: That this Light was heralded by the Baptist. "*There was a man sent by God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through Him might believe.*" According to prophecy (Mal. iii. 1; Isa. xl. 3) John came as the forerunner of the Messiah; came as the morning star to announce the rising Sun. He pointed to the true Light. "Behold the Lamb of God!" It is here stated—

Thirdly: That this Light becomes available by faith. "*That all men through Him might believe.*" How is this Light to enter into the individual soul, scatter its clouds, and fill it with sunshine?

Unbelief closes the windows of the soul, and leaves all its apartments in moral gloom. He who would have this heavenly light streaming into him must *believe*.

No. IV.

CHRIST THE LIGHT OF ALL THE LIVING.

“That (R. V. THERE) was the true Light, (R. V. EVEN THE LIGHT) which lighteth every man that cometh (R. V. COMING) into the world.”—i. 9.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. — “*True Light*.” “The word for ‘true’ is remarkable, it means true as opposed to spurious, not true as opposed to lying. It is, in fact, the old English ‘very,’ e. g. ‘very God of very God.’ All words about truth are very cha-

racteristic of John.” “*Every man*.” The light illumines each man singly, not all collectively. God deals with men separately as individuals, not in masses. The verse, Hippolytus tells us, was used by Basilides in defending his doctrine.—*Plummer*.

HOMILETICS.

The idea which these words give at the first glance is the true idea. Certain Biblical critics, with judgment swayed by theological predilections, have endeavoured to give them a meaning not manifest as they stand. I take them as being true to the original, true to human history, and true to the general teachings of Divine revelation.

The words contain two things—

I.—THAT EVERY MAN COMES INTO THE WORLD WITH A LIGHT IN HIM.

“The candle of the Lord” is in every human breast. It is very dim in infancy; but there it is, ready to be fanned into a strong flame by educational influences. It is very dark in heathenism; but it glimmers there amidst the dense fogs of ignorance and superstition. This Light may be said to reflect on three subjects.

First: On social obligation. There is in every human breast a sense of right and wrong, a feeling that something is due. This sense is often wrongly interpreted: but there it is—it burns on. The wrong-interpretation is but the coloured glass of ignorance through which its beams are seen.

Secondly: On religious worship. The sentiment of a God is universal; so much so, that man has been called a “Religious Animal.”

Thirdly: On future retribution. Man everywhere has an instinctive reference to a life beyond this—a life of reward and punishment. That all men have this Light altogether apart from

a written revelation is—(1.) Clear from *history*. Its rays are seen in the writings of Socrates, Seneca, and many other heathen authors; are seen in the Vedas of the Brahmins, and the sacred books of China and Japan; are seen even in the life of those most degraded of heathen tribes visited by Moffatt and Livingstone. (2.) Clear from the *Word of God*. “The invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.” “For when the Gentiles, which have not the law unto themselves: which show the word of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another; in the day when God shall judge the secret of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel.” “It is absurd to deny the existence of this universal Light, this conscience, this moral monarch of the soul, because in some cases it burns so dimly, and under the glasses of ignorance and superstition, throws a false hue on many of the great subjects of duty and destiny. The ‘candle of the Lord’ does not shine so clearly as it was wont; must it therefore be extinguished entirely? Is it not better to have its dimmest rays than to be in palpable and disconsolate darkness? It is but an old imperfect manuscript with some broken periods, some letters worn out; must they therefore, with an unmerciful indignation, rend it and tear it asunder? It is granted that the picture has lost its gloss and beauty, the orieny of its colours, the elegance of its lineaments, the comeliness of its proportion; must it therefore be totally defaced? Must it be made one great blot?—and must the very frame of it be broken in pieces? Would you persuade the lutanist to cut all his strings asunder because they are out of tune?—and will you break the bow upon no other account but because it is unbended? Because men have not so much of reason as they should, will they therefore resolve to have none at all? Will you throw away your gold because it is mixed with dross? Thy very being, that is imperfect too; thy graces, they are imperfect, wilt thou refuse them also?” (See *Culverwell* on “The Light of Nature.”) Observe—

II.—THAT THE LIGHT IN EVERY MAN IS FROM CHRIST.

“*That was the true Light, that lighteth every man.*” That what? The *LOGOS*—the Word, “which was in the beginning with God,” which “was God,” and which was “made flesh.” He is the Light of humanity. This is what is here taught. Christ is not only the Light that shines in the Gospel, but the Light that shines in the human soul all the world over.

First: This fact exalts Christ to the position of a Creator of souls. This idea was in John's mind when he wrote these words, "Without Him was not anything made that was made." All souls come from the hand of Christ. He puts this inextinguishable light in them, and sends them into this dark world to have it so brightened by educational influences that it may shine a lustrous orb in its own sphere. The sentiments of causation, duty, religion, future retribution, which constitute the light of the soul, are from Christ. We bless Him for this "candle." It will never burn out; it will shine on when stars are extinguished. Christ is not merely the Light of Christendom, He is the Light of heathen lands.

Secondly: This fact reveals the responsibility of heathens. They are not left in utter darkness, Christ is amongst them. They have in them the elements of truth, and many of them without revelation attain to high spiritual intelligence; may it not be that all who act up to the light they have are accepted of their Maker? In expressing the hope that heathens will thus be saved, we are not making salvation independent of Christ, for He is the true Light of all. I rejoice to believe that the rays of Christ's mind and heart fall beyond the pale of Gospeldom.

Thirdly: This fact furnishes an argument for the congruity of Christianity with human nature. Both the natural light in human souls and the light in the Gospel come from the same Source—Christ. Though there are things in the Gospel which men could not have discovered by the light of nature, there is nothing that does not exquisitely harmonize with all their natural intuitions.

Fourthly: This fact supplies a motive to extend the light of the Gospel. Though Christ gave men this natural light, so deeply did He feel their need of a higher light, that He becomes flesh, and dies to give it. May the Light that "lighteth every man that cometh into the world" act with them as the strange star which the old Magi beheld rolling in the heavens—conduct them to the Incarnate God!

No. V.

CHRIST AND MAN.

"He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own (R.V. THEY THAT WERE HIS OWN) received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power (R. V. THE RIGHT) to become the sons (R. V. CHILDREN) of God, even to them that believe on His name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."—i. 10—13.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 10.— *was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.* "He was in the world and the world

hardly less wonderful than the thought. Observe its compact simplicity and grand sonorousness—the world resounding in each successive member of the sentence—and the enigmatic form in which it is couched startling the reader, and setting his imagination a-working to solve the vast enigma of the world's Maker treading on and yet ignored by the world He made.”—*Brown*.

Ver. 11.—“*He came unto His own.*” Who were they? The Jewish people, the descendants of Abraham. “*And His own received Him not.*” Their treatment of Him during His sojourn amongst them was to the last degree unjust, ungrateful, irreverent, and ruthlessly malignant.

Ver. 12.—“*But as many as received Him.*” But how few they were! They continued a “disobedient and gain-saying people.” “*To them gave He power.*” Power of privilege and capability. “*To become the sons of God.*” They were aliens. Moral affiliation to God is the sublimest privilege, but this comes only through Christ.

Ver. 13.—“*Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*” The phrase appears to be parallel with as many as received. The act of reception coincided with the infusion of divine principle by which the later growth became possible.”—*Westcott*.

HOMILETICS.

These words give us *three* distinct classes of men in relation to Christ:—

I.—THOSE WHO KNEW HIM NOT.

This is stated as an extraordinary fact. Though “*in the world the world knew Him not.*” “*In the world:*”

First: In the operations of nature. Shining in its light, breathing in its life, and speaking in its voice.

Secondly: In the intuitions of souls. In the notions of causation, the sentiments of order, the propensities to worship, and the foreboding of conscience.

Thirdly: In the events of history. In the creations of literature, in the progress of science, in the growth of commerce, and in the advancing steps of civilization.

Fourthly: In the special revelations of heaven. Appearing as the Promised Seed to Adam, as the Shiloh to Jacob, as the Counsellor to Isaiah, and the Sun of Righteousness to Malachi, and yet “*the world knew Him not.*” This class comprehends Pagans. Another class of men here given are—

II.—THOSE WHO KNEW HIM, BUT DID NOT RECEIVE HIM.

“*His own received Him not.*” This class comprehends all who are mere hearers of the Gospel. To know Christ, and to reject Him, is to sin against—

First: The benevolent designs of God.

Secondly: The moral sentiments of our being. Such as justice, gratitude, and reverence. Sin against—

Thirdly: The higher interests of human nature.

The other class of men here given are—

III.—THOSE WHO RECEIVED HIM, AND WERE DIVINELY AFFILIATED BY THE RECEPTION.

“*To them gave He power to become the sons of God.*” He unites estranged humanity to God, by in-breathing His own filial disposition. A father may have twelve offspring, all young men, and yet there may be only six, or fewer, *sons*. Concerning those who have lost all filial affection for him, and who have grown hostile to him, he says, They are not my *sons*, they are lost to me; they are my enemies. These loving ones are my sons. *It is filial affection that makes the son.* All men are God’s offspring, but the filial only are His sons. The end of Christ’s mission was to inspire men with the *filial disposition*, and thus make them “*sons of God.*”

NO. Va.

THE INCARNATE GOD.

“And the Word was made (R. V. BECAME) flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of (R. V. FROM) the Father,) full of grace and truth.”—i. 14.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—No less than thirteen introductory verses usher in this announcement of matchless interest to the universe and transcendent benefaction to humanity, announcing one of the grandest epochs. The *Logos* became man, veritable man, not as the ancient Docetae suppose, an apparent man, but a real man. Hence He displays all the features which characterize human nature. He slept, hungered, thirsted, wearied, grieved, &c. A great mystery this! “Who can declare His generation!” “*Dwelt amongst us.*” Tabernacled with man.

He had no settled residence, His stay on earth was transient. “*We beheld His glory.*” The mystic Shekinah radiated through the Temple. “*The glory as of the only begotten of the Father.*” “There is probably a special reference here to the Transfiguration. The glory is such as is the attribute of an only Son.”—*Watkin.* “*Full of grace and truth.*” “Grace corresponds with the idea of the revelation of God as love, by Him Who is Life; and truth with that of the revelation of God as light, by Him Who is Himself Light.”—*Westcott.*

HOMILETICS.

Here we have an account of the wonderful meeting of the human and the Divine in one Person—Christ. Two things are here taught concerning Christ as the *incarnate Deity—the God-Man*—

I.—THE CHRIST OF GOD HAD A BEGINNING.

“*The Word was made flesh.*” “*Flesh*” is used in very different senses in the Word of God. Sometimes it means all *animal nature*,—“The end of all flesh has come before Me.” Sometimes *moral sensibility*—“I will take the heart of stone, and give a heart of flesh,” &c. Sometimes *spiritual depravity*—“They that are in the flesh cannot please God,” &c. Sometimes *human nature*. Thus—

"Thou hast given Him power over all flesh." The text means that the "*Word*," the Divinity, assumed human nature, body and soul. Human nature, however, not in its fallen state, with any taint of corruption in it; but human nature fresh and pure from the hand of God. "He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." Observe then—

First: Christ had human nature. He was not a mere apparition but a veritable Man. He had "flesh"—"He was made in all points like as we are; yet without sin."

Secondly: Christ was something more than human nature. He was a Man, but His humanity was only a constituent part of His personality. His humanity was no more Himself than the body is man.

Thirdly: Christ had the Divine and the human united in one personality. He was Divine, for the Word that became flesh, we are told, "*was God*." But Divinity was no more Christ than the soul is man.

What then is Christ? He is the *union of man and Divinity in One Conscious Personality*. There was no actual Christ in the universe until the Incarnation, until the "*Word was made flesh*." The term "*flesh*" is used rather than man, perhaps because it is impersonal. Christ took not some particular man or type of humanity, but human nature, and became One with the race, that all might have a share in Him. Observe—

II.—THE CHRIST OF GOD LIVED AMONGST MEN.

"*Dwelt amongst us*."* *εσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν*. The word means tabernacled. He pitched His tent amongst men. Three things are here taught concerning this Christ-life among men—

First: This Christ-life was a manifestation of Divine glory to men. "*We beheld His glory*." Jehovah of old revealed Himself to His people in the mystic radiance of the Shekinah, but now in the tabernacle or tent of Christ's humanity He reveals Himself to the human race. The glory of God was seen in His stately deportment, in His sublime doctrines, in His illustrious deeds, but especially was it seen in His transfiguration. "We were eye-witnesses of His majesty," says Peter (2 Peter i. 16, 17). The word seems to point to spectators in a theatre.

Secondly: This Christ-life was the only Divine production of the kind in the universe. "*The only begotten of the Father*." This phrase is used by John in three other places, and by no other inspired writer. What does it mean? Some say—especially beloved. This is unsatisfactory. Others—eternal generation. This is confusion. The only intelligible idea we can attach to it is this: that God "*begot*" or effected the union between Himself and humanity, and that there is no other such union in the universe.

* See *Germes of Thought*, p. 22.

There is only *One* Christ throughout immensity. He is the "*only begotten of the Father*." He stands in the creation as sublimely Unique—"the only begotten."

Thirdly: This Christ-life abounded with grace and truth. "*Full of grace and truth*." The word "*grace*" I take as standing for all that is genial, generous, and loving in temper: and the word "*truth*" as representing all that is substantial, real, and enduring in thought, habit, and life. The former is opposed to all that is cold, selfish, and malign; the latter to all that is hollow, fictitious, and ephemeral. They are two sides or sections of the same thing: and that thing moral goodness, the perfection of God, and the glory and happiness of His intelligent creation. Two remarks are suggested concerning this "*grace and truth*."

First: They are deficient in man, and this is man's ruin.

(1.) Their deficiency is *unnatural*. Man's soul is formed for "*grace and truth*." They are its native atmosphere, no other air will suit its life: its native orbit—in no other sphere will its faculties thrive and move harmoniously. Hence the soul in their absence declines in health—is pained with remorse, and groans under a terrible sense of emptiness.

(2.) Their deficiency is *universal*. This is too astoundingly evident to require argument or illustration. Selfishness and falsehood—their moral opposites—reign supreme in all unregenerate souls.

(3.) Their deficiency is *disastrous*. Their absence gives room for, and facilitates, the growth of every evil thought and passion. The soul in which "*grace and truth*" are not cultivated becomes like the sluggard's vineyard, overgrown with thorns and nettles and noxious weeds. It runs into a wilderness of evils. There is not a wrong institution, a corrupt system, a criminal act, that are not modifications of that selfishness and falsehood which pervade all the souls that are destitute of "*grace and truth*."

Another remark suggested concerning "*grace and truth*" is—

Secondly: They are abundant in Christ, and this is man's hope. He is "*full of grace and truth*." He overflows with those very blessings which fallen men most urgently require. There is an *empty* world: here is a *full* Christ. He has sufficient "*grace and truth*" in Him to fill up every graceless and untruthful soul.

(1.) He is full of "*grace*." All that is generous, loving, compassionate, forgiving, fills Him to an overflow, and it streams from Him in every look, expression, and movement. (a) He is "*full of grace*" notwithstanding His immense *provocations*. Provocations soon exhaust all the kindness in our nature, or rather soon turn it to wrath. What provocations Christ received! Contemplate the treatment He met with from the men of His age!—yet after human enmity had done its worst, He sends offers of mercy to His murderers at Jerusalem. (b) He is "*full of grace*" notwithstanding

His immense *communications*. What millions has He enriched with His grace! Out of His fulness innumerable multitudes have received grace upon grace: yet the fountain in Him is unexhausted, and as full as ever.

(2.) He is "*full of truth*." What is truth? Complete relative truth is *conformity of life to absolute reality*. Truth in *thought* is conformity to eternal *fact*; truth in *life* is conformity to eternal *law*. Christ was "*full*" of the "*truth*." His thoughts about God and His universe: man, his constitution and condition, his duty and destiny, are in exact agreement with eternal reality. His life in every part was in exquisite harmony with absolute and eternal rectitude. He was the "*TRUTH*." He is the only perfect Teacher the world has ever had. "No man hath seen God at any time." Brothers, our duty and our interests agree, and are alike obvious. We need "*grace and truth*" to expel the demons of selfishness and falsehood, and there is only one Being in the universe that can supply our need, and that is Christ. He is "*full of grace and truth*." "Lord, to whom shall we go?"

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. I.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."—John i. 14.
 "That Christ may dwell in your hearts."—Eph. iii. 17.

A DOUBLE INCARNATION.

These two passages present to us two incarnations or Christ's two births—His birth into the world, and His birth into the human soul. Men think more of the former than of the latter—there is a period set apart in every year for its celebration. But the latter is equally momentous. The soul has its births. The rising into conscious existence of every latent sentiment is a birth. There was a time with us all when the *filiol* sentiment had no conscious existence; it was not until we began to think that it was born. The connubial sentiment, as a vital power, is a new birth in the soul; so also is the parental; in childhood's heart this has no conscious life—it is a new birth. The highest birth of the soul is the birth into it of thoughts, sympathies, purposes, that are thoroughly Christlike—the birth of Christ.

Let us notice—

I.—THE ANALOGY BETWEEN THESE TWO INCARNATIONS.

First: Both result from Divine interposition. The child that was born in Bethlehem was begotten of the Spirit, so is His birth in the human soul. His advent to human hearts is in all cases the result of Divine power. "It pleased God," said the Apostle, "to reveal His Son in me."

Secondly: Both create great epochs. The birth of Christ in Bethlehem is the one period that tests the past and determines the future, the convergent and divergent point of all history. The B. C. meets in it; the A. D. starts from it. It is so with this advent in the soul; the greatest epoch in its history is in that event. All after-life takes its date, and derives its impulse from that.

Thirdly: Both awake antagonism. Christ's birth in Bethlehem roused the world to hostility. "Herod sought the life of the young Child." So long as He lived here the world was against Him; its enmity ultimately drove Him hence. It is so with His birth into the soul. It wakes up the antagonism of the depraved nature; old lusts, prejudices, habits, rose up against this young child, and would kill it in the cradle.

Fourthly: Both are manifestations of God. The Babe born in the manger was "God manifest in the flesh." The life of Christ on earth was "the brightness of His Father's glory." So with His birth into the soul. The nature is renewed after the Divine image. The man in whose heart Christ is, is the highest revelation of God on this earth.

Let us notice—

II.—THE DISSIMILARITY BETWEEN THESE TWO INCARNATIONS.

First: The one may become a curse to man, the other must be a blessing. Of all the afflicting and crushing memories that can fall on a lost soul, nothing is so terrible as the birth of Christ into the world. This fact aggravates the world's guilt, and augments the world's responsibility a thousand-fold. How many of the many millions in the lost provinces of God's universe may be ready to exclaim—"Would that the incarnation of Christ had never happened! Would that He had never visited the earth!" On the contrary, His advent to the soul is ever a blessing. It brings the spring and the sunshine of ever-advancing blessedness into it.

Secondly: The one occurred without man's choice, the other requires his seeking. Christ came into the world as the sun rises in the morning, as the seasons roll on—independent of all human choice. A few, it is true, expected Him; but their wishes and hopes had nothing to do with Him coming. He came. But in His advent to the soul He does not force His way into the heart; He waits to be invited. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and will make our abode with him." You must open the door of your hearts, love Him, keep His commandments, and then He will "*dwell in you.*"

Brother, has this spiritual incarnation taken place in thy soul?

Is "Christ formed in thee?" Is He in thee as "the hope of glory?" Does "He dwell in thy heart by faith?" This is the all momentous question. If this incarnation has taken place, thou hast a right to a happy Christmas, and a title to a happy destiny, and thou wilt have it. A true Church is an assembly of men in whom the "*Word has been made flesh*"—men who are the incarnation of Christ. Oh! speed the hour when all the race shall be such incarnations!

No. VI.

CHRIST THE TRANSCENDENT ONE.

"John bare (R. V. BEARETH) witness of Him, and cried, (R. V. CRIETH) saying, This was He of whom I spake, (R. V. SAID) He that cometh after me is preferred (R. V. BECOME) before me: for He was before me. And (R. V. FOR) of His fulness have (R. V. OMIT HAVE) all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."—i. 15—17.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 15.—"*John bare witness of Him.*" This is John the Baptist, the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth, who was six years older than Jesus. "*This was He of whom I spake.*" "Twice on successive days had he heard these words from the lips of the Baptist; three times within a few verses does he record them. They are amongst the words stamped on the hearts in the crises of life, and as fresh in the aged Apostle as they had been in the youthful inquirer. "*He that cometh after me, is preferred before me.*" "The precedence in dignity," says *Westcott*, "which Christ at once assumed when He was manifested, was due to His essential priority. He was in His essence (viii. 58) before John, and therefore at His revelation He took the place which corresponded with His nature."

Ver. 16.—"*And of His fulness have we all received.*" "The Evangelist had

declared, in the 14th verse, that Jesus was full of grace and truth, and now he goes on to testify for himself and the disciples generally, that they had all received of His fulness of grace and truth." "*Grace for grace.*" Grace upon grace. "One and the same grace in its succession, in its constantly renewed impartation."—*Luthardt*. What a fulness of grace in Christ—a fountain copious, ever open, inexhaustible! Take one drop from the ocean, and the mighty volume of waters is so much the less. But the mighty rivers of grace flowing from Christ leave the fountain in its inexhaustible abundance.

Ver. 17.—"*For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*" The "*law*" here stands in contrast to "*grace and truth*;" the eternal law of right knows nothing of grace. Law concerns itself with duty; grace with guilt and misery.

HOMILETICS.

Here Christ appears as He has appeared before in this Gospel and will appear again—as He appears everywhere in the New Testament—the transcendent one.

The verses indicate—

I.—THAT HE IS TRANSCENDENT IN GREATNESS.

"*John bare witness of Him.*" This was his grand mission, as appears in the 7th verse. "*And cried,*" as the voice cried in the

wilderness (Isa. xl. 3). He was earnest in his work as a witness, and what did he thus earnestly testify? "*This was He of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for He was before me.*"

This last expression he repeats several times in this chapter. What does it mean? Simply this,—*He that succeeds me in time transcends me in greatness.* Christ, though born after John, soon shows His superiority to John. John was a great man, he stands forth prominent and radiant. "Amongst those that are born of women," said Christ, "there is not a greater than John the Baptist." But great as he was, he will not bear comparison with Christ.

First: Christ is greater in person. John was a man, a good man, a man inspired by heaven; but still a man and nothing more. Christ united in His personality the human and Divine. "The "Word" so became "flesh," and the "flesh" so became "Word," that they constituted but one Personality.

Secondly: Christ is greater in character. John was a good man, though he shared, no doubt, to some extent, the imperfections common even to the best of men. But Christ was perfect. *Negatively* perfect. He never had sinned. "He was the holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." *Positively* perfect. "He fulfilled all righteousness." He was "*full of grace and truth.*" "*Grace and truth*" came into John, they were imparted. They welled up in Christ as from their native fountain.

Thirdly: Christ is greater in position. John's office was that of forerunner. He had to go before the King in his march, level the hills, exalt the valleys, and announce the Royal approach. Christ was the illustrious King. John stood between his contemporaries and Christ, pointing them to Him. Christ stands between heaven and earth, and says,—"*I am the Way, no man can come unto the Father but by ME.*" Well might John, therefore, say, "*He is preferred before me.*"

The verses indicate—

II.—THAT HE IS TRANSCENDENT IN BENEFICENCE.

"*And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.*" Some read this, grace *instead* of grace. Others, grace *upon* grace. If the first is accepted, we have the idea of one grace taking the place of another, which is constantly occurring, in the experience of humanity. Take God's dealing—(1.) With the *world at large*, and we find one dispensation of grace taking the place of another. The Patriarchal taking the place of the Adamic, the Mosaic taking the place of the Patriarchal, the Gospel taking the place of the Mosaic; thus one dispensation of grace is taken away and another takes its place. Take—

(2.) The *personal experience* of the good, and the same change appears. God takes away temporal graces or gifts, and gives spiritual grace instead: He takes away secular property and physical health, and gives instead spiritual wealth, and moral life and vigour. And even spiritual graces He sometimes exchanges, according to the exigencies of His children. If the latter idea is accepted, viz.—grace *upon* grace, then we have the idea of abundance. Grace flowing in upon grace, like billow on billow in a rising tide, without intermission or end.

Indeed, whichever idea is accepted, three facts concerning Divine grace are suggested—

First: Constant succession. Grace following grace, without a break—following as drops in a river, as seasons follow seasons in the year; there is no pause, no break. "*Grace for grace*"—the river of grace is ever rolling on.

Secondly: Inexhaustible fulness. Paul speaks of the "unsearchable riches of Christ." His "*grace*" is an ocean that has no limits; as light is ever coming from the sun, grace ever flows from Him.

Thirdly: Relative adaptation. "*Grace for grace*," according to the particular exigencies of mankind. One man requires a grace not so needful for another. Nay, the same man does not require the same grace at all times. What would serve him yesterday he may not need to-day; what he needs he shall have. "As thy day, so shall thy strength be."

Now the Evangelist says that of "*His fulness have all we received*." Who are the "*we*"? When he said this, the Gospel had been preached widely through the world. Churches had been planted in all the centres of civilization and influence. Paul had travelled from Jerusalem to Illyricum, and founded a Church even in the Imperial City. The converts to Christianity by this time constituted a multitude difficult to number. And the "*We*" includes them all. He speaks the experience of all the Christians then living, when he said, "*we have received*."

The verses indicate—

III.—THAT HE IS TRANSCENDENT IN HISTORY.

"*For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*." This is given as a reason for the superabundant supply of grace. We are not to suppose either that there was no "*grace and truth*" in the communications of Moses, or that there was no "*law*" in the communications of Christ. This would not accord with fact. There was some portion of "*grace*" in the dispensation of Moses; there was some portion of "*law*" in the dispensation of Christ. The language must be taken in a comparative sense. The Evangelist points to the leading character-

istics of their dispensations. *Rigour and shadow* characterise the dispensation of Moses; *love and reality* that of Christ. Two remarks here may illustrate the passage—

First: The rigour and the shadows brought to the world by Moses were so important as to give him an elevated position in the world's history. Man wanted law, a code of enactments, positive rules for the regulation of his conduct. Man wanted, also, rites and ceremonies, symbols and shadows of the reality. What Moses taught in relation to religion was "a shadow of good things to come," and his law on the whole, says Paul, "worketh wrath" (Rom. iv. 15). Still the *severity* and the *shadow* of the things which Moses brought were so important as to give him a place in the world's history second to no other man's, however illustrious.

Secondly: The love and the reality brought to the world through Christ were so transcendently important as to give Him the highest position in the world's history. "*Grace and truth*," or love and reality, are the two grand essential elements for the spiritual culture and salvation of mankind. Grace for the heart, truth for the intellect. The one to quicken, inspire, develop, the other to direct, guide, and fashion. What have "*grace and truth*" done for humanity? All the real good that has ever appeared in the world, that is now, or ever will be, must be ascribed to the working of these two forces: and these "*came through Jesus Christ*." He revealed them in His teaching, He incarnated them in His life, He glorified them in His death. What the sun is in the heavens, the name of Christ is in the world; not only infinitely more majestic than all the other objects, but the Source of all their radiance.

NO. VII.

CHRIST'S RELATION TO THE GREAT FATHER.

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."—i. 18.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—"*No man hath seen God*." "Not even Moses, or the greatest prophets. Intuitive glances of God all may have, perhaps all have occasionally, but a full sight of God none have but Christ. No man's views of God are to be taken as absolutely correct,

but the views of Christ may be thus taken. '*The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father*.' The image is used of the closest and tenderest of human relationships. The '*bosom of the Father*,' like heaven, is a state, not a place."—*Westcott*.

HOMILETICS.

These first eighteen introductory verses of this Gospel enshrine the sublimest views of the Son of God. The text is almost an epitome of the whole, and it leads us to look at *Christ in relation to the Infinite Father*.

I.—HE IS THE NEAREST RELATION TO THE GREAT FATHER.

"*He is the only begotten Son.*" This phrase occurs in three other places in John's writings (John i. 14; iii. 16 and 18; 1 John iv. 9). That the language implies an essential relation to the ABSOLUTE, perfectly unique, is obvious from two considerations—

First: The interpretation which the Jews attached to it. "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God."

Secondly: The most extraordinary manifestation of Divine love which the sacred writers saw in His mission. "He that spared not His own Son."

Several things connected with His history as recorded by the Evangelists show that He did sustain this essential and *unique* relation to the Great Father.

(1.) His *miraculous conception*. "The angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

(2.) His *entire history*. His whole life agrees with the wonderful account of His supernatural conception, and shows that He was the "*Son of God*" in a sense in which no other man was. His teaching everywhere assumes and asserts it. He speaks of Himself as the "bread" which came down from heaven, and declares over and over again His Oneness with the Father. His miracles attest it. He wrought works that no other man could ever perform. The phenomena, too, connected with His resurrection from the dead, and His ascension into heaven, all go to the same demonstration. The Great Father has many children. All souls human and angelic are His children, but this is His "*only begotten Son.*"

II.—HE IS THE TENDEREST IN AFFECTION TO THE GREAT FATHER.

"*He is in the bosom of the Father.*" He is not only the nearest in *essence*, but the nearest in affection with men, the "*only begotten Son*" may not have the closest relation with the father's heart. In many places Christ is represented as the most endeared object of the Divine affection—"The Son of God." Speaking of the existence He had before all times and all worlds, He says, "I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him;" and of Him, the Great Father said in distant ages, "Behold My servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect in whom My soul delighteth." When Christ was inaugurated to His public ministry, a voice from the Father's heart was heard, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Paul calls Christ God's "*dear Son.*" From this we learn—

First: That God loves. He is not mere Infinite Intellectu-

ality; He is Infinite Sensibility too. He has a heart. We learn from this—

Secondly: That Christ is the highest object of His love. What love is that? Who knows? It is not the love of pity, not the love of gratitude; it is the love of infinite complacency.

III.—HE IS THE MOST ACCURATE IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GREAT FATHER.

“*No man hath seen God at any time.*” God is essentially invisible to creatures. “Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, or can see: to Whom be honour and power everlasting.” In Old Testament times we read of some personal manifestations of God that were seen, but not the absolute Deity. Christ alone hath “*seen God.*”

First: He alone is intellectually qualified to know God. Christ’s intellect is vast enough to comprehend the Absolute Jehovah. The highest created spirit only knows God in *some* of His aspects. Christ knows Him in *all*; knows Him in His being.

Secondly: He alone is morally qualified to know God. He alone is sufficiently pure in heart, and the pure in heart only can see God. He alone is sufficiently powerful. Moses, Isaiah, John, could not stand a slight manifestation of God, much less could they stand the full vision. There is but one Being in the universe Who knows God thoroughly, and that is Christ.

IV.—HE IS THE MOST COMPLETE IN THE REVELATION OF THE GREAT FATHER.

“*He hath declared Him.*” “No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.” He is the “*Logos,*” the only word which can express the Divine heart. “He is the image of the invisible God, the express image of His Person.” What is the revelation which Christ has given of the Father? It refers especially to two things—

First: To His Being. He is a Spirit, Almighty, All-wise, All-present, Invisible.

Secondly: To His relation. A Father, a governing, compassionating, forgiving Father, feeling for humanity as the father of the prodigal felt for his lost son. If Christ is the complete revelation of God, observe—(1.) *That other revelations of God must be tested by His.* As neither Moses or any of the prophets saw Him as Christ saw Him, we must judge of their statements concerning Him by Christ’s. We must interpret the Old Testament by the New, not the New by the Old. Observe—(2.) *That much that is prevalent in religious society must be repudiated as un-Christ-like.* Much in the opinions, in the spirit and institution of Churches

are repugnant to the teaching of Christ. Observe—(3.) *That Christ must be held as the only Moral Master of souls*, He alone hath “seen God,” and can fully reveal Him. We must call no man master—no bishops, archbishops, or popes; no, not even Moses and the prophets. “One is your Master, even Christ.”

No. VIII.

JOHN THE BAPTIST AND THE JEWS.

(*The Testimony of John the Baptist to Jesus: John i. 19—34.*)

“And this is the record of John,” &c.—i. 19—28.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 19.—“*And this is the record* (R. V. WITNESS) *of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites.*” Is this testimony addressed by John the Baptist to a Jewish deputation? The “Jews” here may not mean the Jewish nation, but the Jewish rulers.

Ver. 20.—“*And he confessed, and denied not; but* (R. V. AND HE) *confessed, I am not the Christ.*” Here he resisted what to ordinary men would have been a strong temptation. The people were ready to accept him as the Christ, and his acceptance would have given him enormous popularity and power.

Ver. 21.—“*And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias?*” (R. V. ELIJAH). They had some expectation of the reappearance of Elijah, and would have been glad to welcome him. “*Art thou that* (R. V. THE) *prophet?*” The prophet referred to may be the one promised (Deut. xviii. 15). To these questions he gave a categorical no!

Ver. 22.—“*Then said they* (R. V. THEY SAID THEREFORE) *unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?*” As if they had said: “Thou art an extraordinary personage, and we are anxious to know who thou art; we wish to carry back a definite report.”

Ver. 23.—“*He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias,*” (R. V. ISAIAH THE PROPHET). I am the one that Isaiah describes (chapter xl. 3).

Ver. 24.—“*And they which were*

(R. V. HAD BEEN) *sent of* (R. V. FROM) *the Pharisees.*” “The statement,” says *Watkin*, “is made to explain the question which follows, but it should be observed that in this Gospel, where the Sadducees are nowhere mentioned, the term Pharisees seems to be used almost in the sense of Sanhedrim.”

Ver. 25.—“*And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizeth thou then, if thou be* (R. V. ART) *not that* (R. V. THE) *Christ, nor Elias, (R. V. ELIJAH) neither that prophet?*” Concluding from his replies to these questions, that he disclaimed any special connection with the Messiah’s kingdom, they somewhat naturally demand his right to gather disciples by baptism.

Ver. 26.—“*John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth One among you, (R. V. IN THE MIDST OF YOU THERE STANDETH) whom ye know not.*” “The answer is in two parts, and suggestive rather than explicit. I baptize because the form of this baptism shows that, however striking outwardly, it does not belong to the work of Christ. My work is the work of a servant, and the work of a herald.”—*Westcott*.

Ver. 27.—“*He it is, who coming* (R. V. EVEN HE THAT COMETH) *after me is preferred* (R. V. OMIT) *before me, whose shoe’s latchet* (R. V. THE LATCHET OF WHOSE SHOES) *I am not worthy to unloose.*” “The figure chosen,” says *Luthardt*, “expresses the great difference between the two—I, with emphasis, in contrast with Him, am not worthy to do Him the least service.”

Ver. 28.—“*These things were done in Bethabara* (R. V. BETHANY) *beyond*

Jordan, where John was baptizing." "This name (Judg. vii. 24) is a mere correction made as early as the end of the second century, for Bethany, which was probably an obscure village in Perea, and not to be confounded with

the Bethany on the Mount of Olives. According to a possible derivation, Bethany may mean the house of the boat, as Bethabara the house of the passage, both equally marking the site of a ferry or ford across the Jordan.

HOMILETICS.

In the interlocution between John the Baptist and the Jews two subjects worthy of note are suggested: *a proper question from society to a religious teacher*, and *a satisfactory answer from a religious teacher to society*.

I.—A PROPER QUESTION FROM SOCIETY TO A RELIGIOUS TEACHER.

Before we notice the question asked of John, a word must be said about the *questioners*. Who were they? They were, we are told, "*Priests and Levites from Jerusalem.*" These were the two classes of men who were generally employed in the Temple service, as we find in Joshua iii. 3. They came not of their own authority, but were, "*sent*;" they were delegated by a party of Jews from Jerusalem. At Jerusalem we know there were several religious parties, the chief of which were the Sadducees and Pharisees. These composed the two great powers in the Sanhedrim. Which of these parties sent these priests and Levites to John? The 24th verse tells us they "*were sent of the Pharisees.*" The Pharisees were rigorously exact in all ritualities. The Sadducees did not care much about such points. All ceremonialism was beneath the notice of their majestic intellects. Thousands upon thousands, it would seem, went out from Jerusalem, and the regions round about, and were baptized by John in the Jordan, and the Pharisees became ritualistically anxious on the subject, and consequently sent this deputation.

Now for their *question*; and this question may be divided into two parts; one part relating to John's *personal history*, and the other to his *religious authority*. The former begins with "*Who art thou?*" A very comprehensive question this; more comprehensive than they intended. "*Who?*" What is thy pedigree and pretensions, thy character and circumstances, thy principles and prerogatives? John having denied that he was the Christ, they continued to press the question. "*What then? Art thou Elias?*"—the man we expect to come down from heaven in person, to anoint the Messiah. Having denied that—for although he was an Elias (Mal. iii. 1), he was not *the* Elias they referred to, viz. Elijah, whose appearance they felt he resembled—they proceed. "*Art thou that prophet?*" means, "*Art thou that prophet, like unto Moses, that we expect?*" Having received a negative to this appeal, they continue still to press the question. "*Who art thou?*"

That we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?" Such is the part of the question referring to John's personal history.

The other part of the question refers to John's *religious authority*. Having told them he was the mere "*Voice of one crying in the wilderness,*" and that he was not Christ, nor that prophet, they asked him for his authority in baptizing, "*Why baptizest thou then if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias?*" As if they had said, if thou art neither Christ, nor Elias, nor that prophet, what right hast thou to use this Jewish ceremony of baptism? Give us thine authority for presuming to officiate in the ritualistic department of Jewish worship.

Such was the question which Jewish society put to this new teacher that rose up in their country, a teacher who startled the nation by his eloquence, and commanded a vast popularity. Now, our position is, that this was a very *proper* question. We do not say that they put it in a proper spirit, or for proper reasons, but the question itself was undoubtedly right. Society should ever inquire well into the pretensions and doctrines of a public religious teacher. It should do so—

First: Because of the influence which religious teaching has upon the conduct and destiny of the community even in this life. Heretical religious principles are not only detrimental to the spiritual and future condition of humanity, but are immeasurably injurious to the temporal well-being of society. France, in all her revolutions, and in the last most of all, thunders out this truth. It behoves, therefore, those who are in authority, the guardians of public peace and order, to inquire into the character of the religious teaching to which the people is subjected. It should do so—

Secondly: Because the pernicious in doctrine should be suppressed, and the beneficent encouraged. It is said that every man has not only a right to form his own religious opinions, but to promote them; "that the prophet that hath even a dream should speak it," and that no government has a right by force to infringe on this liberty. Granting this, there is a *moral* power that is mightier than political force, which those in public can employ, aye, and which we think they are bound to employ;—the force of argument, the force of example, the force wielded by a pure literature, a sacred eloquence, a noble life. The time has come, we think, when English society should inquire a little concerning its religious teachers. In the name of Christianity, men are constantly rising up amongst us, with and without culture, hooting crudities and absurdities that insult the human understanding, misrepresent the genius of Christianity, blaspheme Infinite Love, prostrate the weak souls of our community to a miserable superstition, and drive the strong ones into indifferentism and infidelity.

In the interlocation here recorded between John and the Jews, we have suggested—

II.—A SATISFACTORY ANSWER FROM A RELIGIOUS TEACHER
TO SOCIETY.

How did John stand this investigation? Did he treat it with a supercilious silence, or did he answer? If he answered, what kind of answer did he give? Here it is:—"And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent the priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, *Who art thou?*" In John's answer, there are three things indicated which show him to be a true teacher, and which should characterize every teacher worthy of public attention:

First: Unquestionable sincerity. In answer to their interrogatory, he might have said: "I am Elias; or, I am that prophet like unto Moses. I am the Christ, the Messiah you expect." And saying this, in all probability they would have believed him. Anyhow, tens of thousands would have believed him; for he had moved the heart of the nation, and men were crowding about him from all parts. Had he been a false man, a charlatan, the temptation would have been irresistible. But without a moment's pause, in a most emphatic way, he disclaims all such pretensions. "*He confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.*" A Jewish idiom this, to express in the strongest possible way his negative answer. He "*confessed*," he openly avowed it, he thundered it loudly from the banks of the Jordan in the ears of the multitude that crowded about him. Surely, here was a proof of his *sincerity*. He was an incorrupt soul. He could not swerve a hair's-breadth from the path of truth. Crowns and kingdoms were too poor to buy the conscience of a man like him. Sincerity is one of the most cardinal and essential qualifications for a religious teacher. The man who preaches what he does not believe, because it is popular, is often a grand preacher in the estimation of his shallow admirers, but a contemptible charlatan in the eyes of Him who is the Discerner of spirits. In John's answer there is indicated—

Secondly: Profound humility. "*He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness.*" Here he speaks in manifest allusion to the passage (Isa. xl. 3), I am the mere voice of a herald in the Judean desert announcing some one to come. John does not say:—I am the truth; what I say is infallible; nor, I am the Word embodying the true thing. I am only a "*voice*," a mere echo—nothing more. I don't originate what I say; it comes to me. I am its mere organ; I voice it, and that is all. "*I am the voice.*" This humility is another essential qualification for a religious teacher. No man is qualified to teach, who is not well-nigh overwhelmed with a sense of his own insufficiency. How many

religious teachers there are who say, by their manner and mien: "I am the great linguist. I am the original thinker. I am the magnificent orator." Such are destitute of the spirit of a true preacher. "*I am the voice*,"—nothing more.

In John's answer there is indicated—

Thirdly: Supreme reverence for his Master. "*John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth One among you, whom ye know not; He it is, Who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.*" His reverence for Christ is here expressed in two ways. (1.) By intimating that his baptism was but a mere symbol of the baptism of Christ. "*I baptize with water: but there standeth One among you, whom ye know not; HE will baptize you with the Holy Ghost.*" As if he had said: All I do is simply to apply the *material* element to the bodies of men; but Christ, of Whom I am the mere herald—my Great Master, my All—He will apply the *spiritual* element of truth and righteousness to the soul. He will bring the very Spirit of God in contact with souls, in order to cleanse them. My ministry is material, symbolic, temporary. His is *spiritual, real, everlasting*. His reverence for Christ is here expressed (2.) By avowing his conscious inferiority to Christ. The people of the East wore only the sole of a shoe bound fast to the foot by strings passed over and round it. In tropic lands this was agreeable. It was the work of the humblest servant in the family to untie this thong. What John means to say is:—I am not worthy of doing even the meanest thing for Him. Christ to him was all, and in all. Thus it is with all true teachers. "God forbid," says Paul, "that I should glory, save in the cross of Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

CONCLUSION: Let society look well after its religious teachers, and see that they show that *sincerity* in their service, that *humility* of heart, that *reverence* for Christ, that came out in the answer of His illustrious Herald, on the banks of the Jordan, to the deputation of the Jewish Sanhedrim.

"Would I describe a preacher such as Paul,
Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own,
Paul should himself direct me. I would trace
His master-strokes, and draw from his design:
I would express him simple, grave, sincere:
In doctrine uncorrupt, in language plain,
And plain in manner: decent, solemn, chaste,
And natural in gesture: much impress'd
Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
May feel it too: affectionate in look,
And tender in address, as well becomes
A messenger of grace to guilty men."—*Cowper*.

No. IX.

THE GLORIOUS WORK OF CHRIST AND THE SUPREME MISSION
OF THE PREACHER.

"The next day (R. V. ON THE MORROW) John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is He of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred (R. V. BECOME) before me : for He was before me. And I knew Him not : but that He should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come (R. V. FOR THIS CAUSE CAME I) baptizing with water. And John bare record, (R. V. WITNESS) saying, I saw (R. V. HAVE BEHELD) the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, (R. V. AS A DOVE OUT OF HEAVEN) and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not : but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same (R. V. HE) said unto me, Upon whom (R. V. WHOMSOEVER) thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining (R. V. ABIDING) on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost (R. V. SPIRIT). And I saw, and bare record (R. V. HAVE SEEN AND HAVE BORNE WITNESS) that this is the Son of God."—i. 29—34.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. Ver. 29.—*"The next day."* These words contain the testimony which John the Baptist addressed to his own disciples concerning Christ. It was delivered, we are told, *"the next day:"* that is, the day after the deputation from Jerusalem had visited him, detailed in the preceding verses, and which we have already noticed ; and it was, perhaps, immediately after the return of Christ from the wilderness, where He had been tempted by the devil. He appears now on the banks of the Jordan, after a terrible moral battle, in which He became the triumphant victor. *"Behold the Lamb of God."* This is descriptive of the harmlessness and holiness of Jesus. Andrew calls Him the Messiah ; Philip the One predicted in the Old Testament ; Nathanael, the Son of God, the King of Israel ; John, here struck, it may be for the moment, as he saw Him in His calm,

tender, yet stately aspect, speaks of Him as the *"Lamb."*

Ver. 31.—*"And I knew Him not."* The reference is to "whom ye know not" of ver. 26, and the assertion is not therefore inconsistent with the fact that John did know Him on His approach to Baptism.

Ver. 32.—*"I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him."* "The Spirit comes down from heaven—that is, an influence passed from God to Jesus. It was not an influence starting from Jesus, not a mental excitement of Jesus, or the like, but an objective impartation of the Spirit of God to Jesus. The 'dove' in the Scriptures is the figure of peaceable and pure simplicity. It serves to characterize the New Testament manner of the revelation of God in Jesus, perhaps in distinction from the fiery zeal of an Elijah."—*Luthardt.*

HOMILETICS.

We shall regard these words as illustrating the *glorious work of Christ and the supreme mission of the preacher.*

I. THE GLORIOUS WORK OF CHRIST.

What is His work ? To appease Divine vengeance ? To give to the Eternal a certain kind and measure of suffering for a certain number of souls ? It is not said so here. It is to *"take away the sin of the world."* Sin is in the world ; this is the dark fact in its history ; this is at once its curse and its ruin. Christ came "to put

away sin"—as Paul has it: to put it away, not from a certain class or classes, not from particular sections, but from the WORLD. What does it mean? Not burying in oblivion the *fact* of sin—the dark fact will ever be memorable in the universe—but it means taking away its painful consciousness, its dominant power, its polluting influences, its damning issues.

First: This is the most difficult work. Senators, poets, sages, priests have tried a thousand times, and through a thousand ages, to put away sin; but they have failed—signally failed. Christ has commenced it, He is pursuing it, and He will do it.

Secondly: This is the most indispensable work. Sin is the fountain of all our intellectual, social, moral, political, and religious suffering. Until this fountain is dried up, the streams of misery will ever roll through the heart of the world. Sin must be taken away from our literature, our governments, our institutions, our hearts, before the world can be made happy. And this is Christ's work: for this He came into the world, suffered, died, rose, ascended into Heaven, and now manages the universe. Notice—

II. THE SUPREME MISSION OF THE PREACHER.

What is the great work of the preacher? Propounding theories, battling for theologies? No; but *pointing men to Christ*, as John did, saying, "*Behold the Lamb of God!*" There is no reason for supposing that John alludes here either to the Paschal lamb or to the lamb of daily sacrifices. His allusion, most probably, is to the 53rd chapter of Isaiah. The metaphor is descriptive, not necessarily of suffering or of sacrifices, but of spotless innocency and holy gentleness. John here directs his disciples to Christ—

First: As One Who was to deliver the world from sin. "*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!*" Sin is a small word, but big with meaning. It always implies four things—(1.) The *existence* of law. (2.) The *means of knowing* law. (3.) The *capability of obeying* law. (4.) *Actual departure* from law. The preacher's work is to point men to Christ as the Sin-Deliverer. No one else can do it. "There is no other name given under heaven," &c.

Secondly: As One Who was greater than himself. "*After me cometh a Man which is preferred before me: for He was before me.*" This expression is the same as that in the 27th verse, and it means, as we have seen, the superiority of Christ. John means by it that He Who is after me in time is greater than me in the universe. Every true preacher should be deeply impressed with the transcendent superiority of Christ. How deeply did Paul feel this! "I am the least of all saints," &c.

Thirdly: As One Who was revealed to him by Heaven. "*And I knew Him not: but that He should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John knew*

record, saying, *I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him.*" Christ was revealed to John by the Spirit, which descended from heaven like a dove. Up to that time, it would seem, he did not know Him. "*I knew Him not.*" At the baptism He was revealed to him in all the beauty of His character and the grandeur of His mission. Unless God reveals Christ to us, we cannot preach Him. How can we make Him known to others unless we know Him ourselves? And God must impart this knowledge; "flesh and blood" cannot reveal Him to us.

Fourthly: As One Who was the true Baptizer of men. "*And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.*" Deliverance from sin requires a baptism, a spiritual cleansing. This is the *real* baptism; other baptisms are but the shadows and symbols. This baptism is done by Christ, He "*baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.*"

Fifthly: As One Who was the Son of God. "*And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.*" In the Synoptic Gospel Christ is termed the "well-beloved Son;" in St. Paul's writings He is called "God's own Son;" and in this Gospel He is called "the only begotten Son." It is a title expressive of His Divine essence, relationship, and dignity. Every true preacher must declare Christ to be superhuman and all-perfect. "I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God." (See Liddon's "Bampton Lectures," page 246.)

CONCLUSION: Here, then, is our work as preachers: pointing men to Christ as the One Who is to deliver the world from sin, as the One infinitely greater than ourselves, as the One revealed to our souls by the Spirit of God, as the One Who is to dispense the true baptism to our souls, as the One Who is the Son of God.

No. X.

CHRIST WINNING HIS FIRST TWO DISCIPLES.

(*Jesus gains Disciples.*—JOHN i. 35—51.)

"Again the next day after (R. V. ON THE MORROW) John stood, (R. V. WAS STANDING) and two of his disciples; and looking (R. V. HE LOOKED) upon Jesus as He walked, he (R. V. AND) saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then (R. V. AND) Jesus turned, and saw (R. V. BEHELD) them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto Him: Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest (R. V. ABIDEST) Thou? He saith unto them, Come and see (R. V. YE SHALL SEE). They came and saw where He dwelt, (R. V. ABODE) and abode with Him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother."—i. 35—40.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 35.—“*Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples.*” We need not suppose that these two were absent the previous day. Probably the words they heard the day before had so interested them that they came to see the Teacher Himself.

Ver. 36.—“*And looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God.*” John, seeing Jesus walking, repeats the expression as in verse 29.

Ver. 37.—“*And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.*” “Not as disciples leaving all as yet, but rather going after Him in the way of enquiry.”

Ver. 38.—“*Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto*

them, What seek ye?” This the Great Teacher says to every man.

Ver. 39.—“*Come and see.*” “The usual formula addressed by the Rabbi to his pupil, when he would invite his attention to some striking point or new doctrine.” “*They came and saw where He dwelt.*” “It may have been a house, a tent, or, as is often the case in Palestine, a cave.”

Ver. 40.—“*One of the two was Andrew.*” Andrew was a native of Bethsaida, and the brother of Simon Peter. The Evangelists give us a very small amount of information concerning him. He was present at the feeding of the five thousand: he with Philip introduced to Jesus certain Greeks who desired to see Him.

HOMILETICS.

These words are memorable, inasmuch as they record the *first* men won as adherents by Him, Who came to “gather all men unto Himself.” The untold millions of men who will complete the great Church at last began with these two whom Jesus now won to His doctrines, His enterprise, and Himself. Only the name of one is given, “*Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother,*” whilst two disciples are referred to. Who was the other—the unnamed one? Undoubtedly John—the tender, meditative, intuitional John, the “beloved disciple”—the author of this Gospel. He was too modest to mention his own name; he was one of those rare men who are too great to aspire after worldly fame. Genuinely great men seek goodness not greatness: their greatness is unknown to themselves, and by themselves undesired and unsought.

The text leads us to notice two things concerning them—

I.—THEIR CONVERSION TO CHRIST.

Here three things are worthy of note—

First: It was effected by their old master, John the Baptist. These two men were called John’s disciples—“*The next day after John stood, and two of his disciples.*” They had heard the terrible sermons of John, they had submitted to his baptism, but he now turns them to another Master, One “*whose shoe latchet,*” he told them, “*he was not worthy to unloose.*” It is something uniquely grand, in this selfish world, to see a religious teacher turning his disciples to a Master of a higher type. Preachers of little souls are ever studiously anxious to keep their hearers entirely under their own influence, and when greater instructors appear in their

circle, they rather warn their people against them, than direct them to their more enlightened ministry. Not so John the Baptist.

Secondly: It was effected by their old master through the proclamation of the grandest truth. That truth was this, "*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!*" The meaning of this sublime expression we have already explained. The expression is tantamount to all that is contained in the cross, and the cross is the converting power. How did he pronounce these words, with what emphasis and tone! His eyes helped his voice to give effect to the proclamation, "*And looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!*" The eye is a handmaid to oratory; its flash of feeling often feathers the arrow of a sentence, and bears it home to the heart of the hearer.

Thirdly: It was effected by the old master, after they had heard him without effect. "*And the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples.*" The "*day after*,"—the day referred to in the preceding paragraph, when John before directed his hearers to the "*Lamb of God.*" These disciples were undoubtedly present on that occasion; they heard his voice thundering out the same truth; but they were not then, it would seem, won to Christ. On the day before, there seems to have been a great multitude listening to John, but we have no account of any of the number accepting Christ; but now he speaks to *two* only, and the two were converted. "*And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.*" There are two lessons here for preachers—

(1.) Do not be discouraged. If you fail to convert sinners by one sermon, you may by the next. "Be instant in season," &c.
 (2.) Do not be influenced too much by the size of your congregation. John preached to multitudes on the previous day, apparently without effect. He preaches to two now, and the two "*followed Jesus.*"

The text leads us to notice—

II.—THEIR FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST.

First: Christ BEGAN the fellowship. "*Jesus turned and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye?*" He knew they were seeking Him. He therefore means, What seek ye *with Me?*—not *whom* seek ye? By this question He touched their hearts. He showed that He knew they were seeking something. He gives them an opportunity to ask what they wanted. Christ always begins the fellowship with His disciples; He stimulates their inquiries.

Secondly: Christ ENCOURAGED the fellowship. He answers their question. "*They said unto Him, Rabbi, where dwellest Thou?*" Where art Thou staying? a question indicating a desire for a close fellowship,—and here is the answer: "*He saith unto them, Come*

and see." He does not say here or yonder, but come with Me. Christ has nothing to conceal. He wishes the world to know all about Him, to follow all the windings of His life, and to peer into all the details of His history. "*Come and see.*" This is, in truth, the voice of the whole Gospel to men. Do not judge from hearsay, search for yourselves.

Thirdly: Christ CONTINUED the fellowship. "*They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.*" The "*tenth hour,*" in the Jewish calculation, was about four o'clock in the afternoon. Ever memorable hour to them, that hour when they entered His lodging-place, and sat down to listen to His words; that was the beginning of a fellowship that has been going on until this day, and that may go on for millenniums, ever heightening, ever blest.

CONCLUSION: Behold the "day of small things;" despise it not. Here is the beginning of the Church; here is that seed that has already spread over many climes and many ages, and yielded unnumbered harvests. Here is the first drop of that fountain that has swollen into a majestic river.

No. XI.

MAN'S WORK AND CHRIST'S WORK IN THE REFORMATION OF SOULS.

"He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, (R. V. MESSIAH) which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, (R. V. JESUS LOOKED UPON HIM) He said, Thou art Simon the Son of Jona: (R. V. JOHN) thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone (R. V. PETER)." —i. 41, 42.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 41.—"*He first findeth his own brother Simon.*" This means that the first thing Andrew did on the morning after visiting Christ at His dwelling, was to go in search of his brother. Beautifully natural this. The fraternal instinct. "*We have found the Messiah.*" What a sublime discovery to make to his brother! We have found Him—Him for whom the past ages have been looking, and by whom future ages will rise.

Ver. 42.—"*And he brought him to Jesus.*" What better could he do for

his brother than this? What better can any man do for another than this? "*And when Jesus beheld him, He said, Thou art Simon the Son of Jona.*" "This is not necessarily a prophetic declaration by Divine knowledge. It rather means simply, This is your natural name. Some take the phrase interrogatively, 'Art thou?' 'Thou shalt be called Cephas.' Hereafter thou shalt win the name of Cephas. The Aramaic name is found in the New Testament, elsewhere, only in 1 Cor. i. 12; iii. 22; ix. 5; Gal. i. 18; ii. 9; xi. 14."—*Westcott.*

HOMILETICS.

These words suggest two things—

I.—MAN'S WORK IN THE CONVERSION OF SOULS.

"*He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We*

have found the *Messias*, which is, being interpreted, the *Christ*. And he brought him to Jesus." "*Brought him to Jesus*;" this is man's part in the great work of converting souls. He has to bring men to Jesus—not to creeds, theologies, sects, churches, but to the Anointed of God. This work of Andrew was—

First: **BENEFICENT**. What a universe of good was involved in this simple act! (1.) What a service was rendered to Peter! His soul was translated into a new world. (2.) What a service to the disciples of Christ! The introduction into their society of a nature like his, warm, frank, generous, bold, thoroughly inspired with Christian sentiment, must have been a great gain to that little circle. (3.) What a service was rendered to the whole world! The Infinite alone can tell the good which Peter has accomplished. By his one sermon on the Day of Pentecost he converted three thousand souls. He became the disciple of Christ, and lovingly interested in all that pertained to the great kingdom of truth.

Peter preached the Gospel to the Gentiles. The Infinite alone can tell the amount of good which Peter has already accomplished in the universe. All this must be referred to the simple act of Andrew bringing him to Jesus. From one single human act may issue an influence for good that may go widening and deepening through the centuries. The highest service you can do on earth is to bring men to Jesus. The work of Andrew was—

Secondly: **NATURAL**. Andrew went to Peter, not as an *official*, but as a *man*, a brother. "*He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias.*" All that is wanted to bring men to Christ is—(1.) *The common attributes of a man*. It does not require great genius, learning, or high culture, which distinguish only a few, but that which all men have—common sense. (2.) *Common love to Christ*. Andrew hastened to Simon with a heart touched and inspired with loving sympathies for Christ. What is wanted in this work is not the influence of man as a scholar, philosopher, priest, or bishop, but the influence of man as man. It is the *man*, not the *preacher*, who converts. When the man is lost in the preacher he has no power to win souls to Christ. In modern pulpits we want manhood redeemed from the fetters and grimaces of officialism. The work of Andrew was—

Thirdly: **HONOURABLE**. When Andrew went forth to Peter and persuaded him to come to Jesus, he did a work whose grandeur no seraph could transcend. To introduce a man to Christ is to introduce him to One Who in philosophy is infinitely greater than a Socrates, in wealth infinitely greater than a Cræsus, in royalty infinitely greater than a Cæsar. You bring him to One Who is the wisdom of God, One Who has "the unsearchable riches," One Who is "the Prince of the kings of the earth." The work of authors, sages, statesmen, warriors, is contemptible compared

with the work of bringing men to Christ. The work of Andrew was—

Fourthly: EXEMPLARY. Andrew in bringing Peter to Christ is an example for universal imitation. (1.) *It is an example that all can imitate.* Though a glorious work, it is nevertheless so simple that it may be accomplished by a child. All that is wanted is a Christ-loving heart. (2.) *It is an example that all should imitate.* It is the duty of all Christians to bring men to Christ. It is not a work binding on any particular class, it is an obligation pressing on all. All relations—parents, children, brothers and sisters. All social grades, rich and poor. All intellectual types, the weak and the strong, the learned and the rude. The world is perishing with moral hunger. He is the BREAD OF LIFE. Our work is not to bring men to our little systems, sects, and churches, but to CHRIST. Unless we do this, services, however popular, are neither acceptable to Him nor of worth to human souls. Notice here—

II.—CHRIST'S WORK IN THE CONVERSION OF SOULS.

"And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, He said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone." All that we can do is to bring man to Christ: Christ must effect the great change. We can bring men to Christ, Christ brings men to themselves and to God. Christ did two things to Peter now in effecting the change—

First: Made him feel that he was personally known to Him. *"Thou art Simon, the son of Jona."* Peter might have said, "How dost Thou know me? I have never met Thee before, and yet Thou knowest me." He felt, no doubt, that Christ had read him through and through, knew all within him and about him. Perhaps this is the first step in every conversion,—man is made to feel that God knows him. "God is in this place, and I knew it not."

Secondly: Gave him an ideal character to struggle after. (1.) He was brought into contact with that type of character of which he was most *signally destitute*. (a) The type of character which Christ now held forth to Peter was Christian firmness. He said, *"Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone."* "A stone" is the best emblem which the earth furnishes of firmness. Nothing more firm than granite rocks. What is Christian firmness? *Not obstinacy.* Obstinacy is such a pertinacious adherence to an opinion or a purpose as will yield neither to reason nor persuasion. Firmness is not *hardness*. It is foreign to the rough and harsh and insolent. It is allied to the deepest tenderness. He who set His face as "a flint" was tender. Christian firmness involves two things—enlightened convictions of Christian realities, and fixedness of affections upon

the Christian's God. It is a rooting and grounding of the soul in truth and God. There is no *nobility* without firmness; whilst the obstinate man is despised, and the fickle man untrusted, the firm man commands reverence. Firmness is an essential element in all that is noble and heroic in character. There is no *usefulness* without firmness. The vacillating man is as "unstable as water," and cannot excel. Instability is failure in every department of life. The firm men do the work of the world. There is no *godliness* without firmness. Godliness begins in centering the soul upon the Supremely Good: "O God, my heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise." (b) *This firmness Peter sadly lacked.* Constitutionally Peter was a man of strong impulse and surging passion. He was therefore liable to vacillation and instability. This changefulness painfully shows itself even after his conversion. From impulse you may find him rushing to meet Christ, and endeavouring to walk on the sea, and from lack of faith about to sink into the whelming waters. No man confessed the Divinity of Christ with more explicitness and intensity than Peter, and yet after he denied Him thrice, and thrice with oaths. He was the first man to receive a Gentile into the Christian Church, and thus brave the opposition of the Jews; and yet, subsequently, we find him refusing to sit down at the Lord's table with converted Gentiles, and thus exposing himself to the righteous censures of St. Paul. Now, Christ in holding up to Peter at their first meeting firmness, held up that very phase of character which he most signally lacked. When Christ said, "*Thou shalt be called Cephas—a stone,*" his inmost soul must have responded, "I am not a stone; rather than a rock, I am a reed shaken by the wind." When souls come to Christ He makes them feel their *missing* qualities of good, their lacking attributes of virtue. To the dishonest He holds forth righteousness; to the false, faithfulness; to the greedy, generosity; to the unclean, chastity; to the sceptical, faith; to the profane, reverence. Thus He touches the soul on its weak and vicious points. (2.) He is brought into contact with a type of character to *reach which is his destiny.* "*Thou shalt be called Cephas.*" Christian firmness was the idea now held forth to Peter's soul. It blazed as a Divine light before him. Ever afterwards we have no doubt he struggled earnestly to attain it. And the struggle involved a moral revolution within. In reading his history, his sermons, and his letters, we see his gradual progress towards this firmness, until in his martyrdom it reached its earthly consummation. On the day of Pentecost, how firm! Standing a prisoner before the Sanhedrim, how firm! How firm in his preaching to the Gentiles!—how firm in his first epistle! We first meet with Peter uncertain as a shifting cloud, and as noisy as a tempest; we leave him as settled as a star, and as serene in soul as a summer's eve.

CONCLUSION.—First: Christ holds out to all His disciples an ideal. You have the ideal—(1.) In His teachings. (2.) In His example.

Secondly: This ideal is at variance with our natural dispositions. It was so now with Peter. In his case Christ held forth the morally firm to the fickle and the turbulent.

Thirdly: Though the ideal is at variance with our natural disposition, we must struggle after and reach it. What is our grand work in life? To realize those ideals of character that Jesus of Nazareth holds forth to our souls. Blessed be His name for those ideals, they are the lights of *the moral world*!

NO. XII.

A GENUINE EVANGELIZER AND A GENUINE TRUTH-SEEKER.

"The day following Jesus would (R. V. ON THE MORROW HE WAS MINDED TO) go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow Me. Now Philip was of (R. V. FROM) Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any (R. V. CAN ANY) good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip said unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under (R. V. UNDERNEATH) the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, (R. V. THE HEAVEN OPENED) and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."—i. 43—51.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 43.—"*The day following.*" This was the next day after Peter was called and designated, and the fourth day after what is recorded in the nineteenth verse. The scene of the events here recorded we are told was "*Bethsaida*," not the Bethsaida at the head of the Lake sometimes called Bethsaida-Julius, but the Bethsaida on the western side of the lake where Christ wrought many of His miracles, and which shared His denunciation with Capernaum on account of its unbelief.

"*Findeth Philip.*" Philip is referred to in three or four places in the New Testament. We find him present at the miracle of the loaves and fishes (John vi. 7). We find him appealed to by the Greeks, requesting

an introduction to Jesus, and instead of going to Jesus, he goes to Andrew, to join him in the work (John xii. 22). We find him also present at the last supper (John xiv. 8).

Ver. 45.—"*Philip findeth Nathanael.*" We have but very little information concerning Nathanael. He is generally supposed to be the same as is sometimes called Bartholomew. The fact that in the first three gospels Philip and Bartholomew are commonly named together, and Nathanael is not mentioned, affords ground for the belief that the two names are the designation of the same person. We learn that he was a native of Galilee (John xxi. 2); that he was one of the twelve Apostles; that he was one to whom our Lord appeared at the Sea

of Tiberias after His resurrection; and that he was also a witness of the Ascension, and returned with the other Apostles to Jerusalem.

Ver. 47.—“*Behold an Israelite, in whom is no guile.*” “The word of the Lord, addressed not directly to Nathanael, but to others on his approach. The reason why Nathanael is called a genuine Israelite is his freedom from falsehood. In the Jewish nature there was much guile.”

Ver. 49.—“*When thou wast under the fig tree.*” “Jesus must have seen something in the spiritual posture of Nathanael under the fig tree which

marked the person of the Israelite without guile.”—*Lange.*

Ver. 51.—“*Verily, verily.*” “We meet for the first time with the formula Amen, Amen, which is found twenty-five times in John, and nowhere else in the New Testament. Thence is derived the title of Jesus, the Amen.”—*Godet.* “*Angels of God.*” “Angels are the instruments of Divine power in the domain of nature. This saying refers therefore to phenomena which, while passing the domain of nature, are due to a causality superior to the laws of nature.”

HOMILETICS.

Here we have—

I.—A GENUINE EVANGELIZER.

Philip represents this character. We find two things here connected with his history which are essential to every genuine Evangelizer.

First: He is called by Christ. “*Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow Me.*” “*Follow Me;*” what words are these! (1.) Christ’s masterhood is in them. They seemed to rise higher in authority than the words He had uttered just before—“*Come and see.*” Were He only a man this utterance would be the height of arrogance, but being Divine it is in beautiful accord with His character. “*Follow Me;*” I am your Teacher, your Chieftain, your Lord. (2.) God’s law is in them. They are an epitome of the moral code of the universe; they contain the Decalogue and more. Christ is the Divine law of humanity, the law in human life, experience, and conduct. The whole duty of man is reduced to these two words, “*Follow Me.*” (3.) Converting force is in them. There went with these words an energy that not only arrested the attention but turned the whole nature of Philip to Christ. He began to follow Him at once, and continued doing so through his mortal life, and has not, I presume, paused in his Divine career through all the ages since. This is the first step a man must take to become a true Evangelizer.

Secondly: He calls men to Christ. “*Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found Him of Whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*” The same feeling that prompted Andrew to search out his brother Simon (ver. 41) prompted Philip now to find out Nathanael. He “*findeth Nathanael;*” this is his first Evangelic effort. No sooner does a man become a genuine follower of Christ

than he feels at once an earnest solicitude to bring others to a knowledge of his blessed Master. Such is the influence which Christ's truth and love has upon the social affections of His disciples, that they feel at once the "necessity laid upon them" to preach the Gospel. Here then is the genuine Evangelizer. He is a man who first follows Christ, and then finds out others to join him in the moral march.

The other character which the narrative presents to us is :

II.—A GENUINE TRUTH-SEEKER.

Who is the truth-seeker? Nathanael. He puts the question to Philip, "*Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?*" Observe three things in relation to him as a truth-seeker—

First, His efforts as a genuine truth-seeker.

(1.) He *hearkens to information* concerning the truth. "*Philip saith to him, we have found Him of whom Moses in the law,*" &c., and Nathanael listens. He listens attentively to the statement that One was found amongst them who was the substance of Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write. Christ is the Bible.⁵

Philip in this language implies the opinion that Christ was the grand theme of the Old Testament writings. So, indeed, we are everywhere taught to regard Him. The ceremonies of the Mosaic system were shadows of which He was the substance. The predictions of the prophets were but sketches of a portrait of which He was the Original. Christ Himself taught this more than once, and especially to the disciples on the way to Emmaus after His resurrection; for in that conversation, "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." Christ is the spiritual substance of the Bible. He that believes in Him believes in the Bible, though he may not be able to believe in all the statements contained in the Book. Nathanael hearkened to this wonderful intelligence concerning Christ.

(2.) He *renounces a prejudice* against the truth. "*And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?*" Bethlehem was the Messiah's predicted birthplace. Nazareth had no mention in the prophecies concerning Him, still Philip said Nazareth; and Nathanael felt that if He came from Nazareth He could not be the Messiah. "*Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?*" The ill repute of Nazareth was proverbial. The prejudice that no good thing "*could come out of Nazareth*" started as the first opposition to the truth that Philip had propounded. This prejudice of Nathanael, like most prejudices, had but a poor foundation. It implies an exaggerated estimate of the power of social influence. It goes on the assumption that if the great bulk of a population is bad, no individual can be good.

But man, endowed as he is, with the power of independent thought and moral action, can break away from any social circle, take a path for himself, and make a character of his own. If he could not do so, he would not be responsible; and more, he has done so; and more still, he is morally bound to do so. Still, this prejudice was in Nathanael's way, and this prejudice he overcame.

(3.) He *prosecutes an inquiry* in search of truth. "*Philip saith unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael,*" &c. Philip does not reason with him concerning the groundlessness of his prejudice, but merely invites him to "*Come and see*" for himself. Nathanael takes his advice, and goes with him. Jesus seeing him approaching goes forth to meet him, says of him, "*Behold an Israelite indeed.*" In pursuing his inquiry—(a) He is influenced by the words of Philip. "*Come and see.*" Such a common sense, straightforward, manly appeal as this he could not easily resist. (b) He is greeted by Christ. "*Behold an Israelite indeed.*" (c) He is struck by conviction. "*Whence knowest Thou me?*" He felt that his very heart had been read by Him Who had proclaimed him to be without "*guile*"—a sincere seeker for the truth.

Secondly: His success as a genuine truth-seeker. To his question, "*Whence knowest Thou me?*" Jesus replies, "*Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.*" These words made him feel at once that he had found the Messiah. Nathanael had been under the fig tree, but did not suppose that any one saw him there. It was customary in those places at this period for students to meet their teachers in the morning and sit and study under the shade of the fig-tree. Nathanael had been there perhaps alone, studying the prophecies concerning the Messiah, and in a guileless spirit invoking Heaven for light. The declaration of Christ led him to exclaim at once, "*Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel.*" Here is a full avowal of His Messiahship, and it shows that what he had been looking out for he now has. (a) A Divine Teacher. "*Rabbi, Son of God.*" (b) A Divine King. "*King of Israel.*"

Thirdly: His blessedness as a genuine truth-seeker. "*Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And He said unto Him, Verily, Verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open,*" &c. The language implies two things.

(1.) That Nathanael now had seen great things. What a revelation was made to his soul at this time! What a revelation of himself, and of the world, and of Christ! When a man first believes in Christ, great things rise on the horizon of his soul. All things appear in new lights; old things pass away.

(2.) That great as the things were that he now saw, *far greater things would be revealed to him in the future.* The key to this great

saying is Jacob's vision (Gen. xxxiii. 12). Nathanael had called Christ the "*Son of God*," Christ calls Himself the "*Son of Man*." It is the first time He gives Himself this title, the title that He applies to Himself in almost all the subsequent parts of His history. "*The Son of Man*"—thoroughly human. Not the son of a Jew, or Gentile, or any particular tribe or race, but of *man*, the second Adam, the moral head of humanity. The promise is—(a) That he should see a new universe. "*Heaven open*." (b) A new class of intelligence. "*The angels of God*." (c) A new order of ministry. "*Ascending and descending*"—a ministry between heaven and earth. (d) A new centre of attraction. Angels ascend and descend on the "*Son of Man*." What prospects are open to the *genuine* truth-seeker! The heavens of his soul will open wider, and grander visions will charm his existence.

No. XIII.

THE GLORY OF CHRIST IN HIS FIRST MIRACLE.

(*The marriage at Cana*.—JOHN ii. 1—11.)

"And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, (R. V. JESUS ALSO WAS BIDDEN) and His disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, (R. V. THE WINE FAILED) the mother of Jesus saith unto Him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it. And (R. V. NOW) there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, (R. V. AFTER THE JEWS' MANNER OF PURIFYING) containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And He saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor (R. V. RULER) of the feast. And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made (R. V. NOW BECOME) wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew (R. V. HAD DRAWN) the water knew,) the governor (R. V. RULER) of the feast called (R. V. CALLETH) the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth (R. V. SETTETH ON FIRST) good wine; and when men have well drunk (R. V. FREELY) then that which is worse: *but* thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles (R. V. HIS SIGNS) did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth (R. V. MANIFESTED) His glory; and His disciples believed on Him."—ii. 1—11.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—"Ver. 1.—"*The third day*." From what? Undoubtedly from the incident recorded in the preceding verses. "*Cana of Galilee*," not the Cana in Samaria. The place is now called Kana el-Jalib, a little town about eight or nine miles north-easterly of Nazareth. Nathanael was of this place. "*There was a marriage*." There are several traditions as to the parties who were

joined together at this time. Some suppose that St. John himself was the bridegroom—others, Simon the Canaanite—and others think that it was the marriage of Mary and Cleophas. The last is the opinion most probable, and most generally accepted. "*The mother of Jesus was there*." Her husband Joseph does not seem to have been present. Probably he was dead, and she was a widow. Nothing

has been heard of him for eighteen years, when he was in search of Jesus at the Temple.

Ver. 2.—“*Jesus was called, and His disciples.*” They were “*called*,” that is, invited. The twelfth verse gives us to understand that His “*brethren*” were also there. But it is not said that either they or His mother were “*called*.” Being relations, they seemed to have been there as a matter of course, and required no invitation. His disciples at this time were Peter and Andrew, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, and they were all present.

Ver. 3.—“*And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto Him, They have no wine.*” Perhaps this marriage-feast continued longer than the usual time, or more guests attended than were first expected, or provided for. Such feasts as these lasted sometimes seven, or even fourteen days. “*They have no wine.*” Why did Mary go to Jesus with this statement? It is certain from her sublime song called the Magnificat, in Luke i. 46—56, as well as what she had often witnessed in the life of her Son, that she regarded Him as being endowed with Divine power. She might, therefore, have desired on such an interesting occasion to witness in her Son a striking manifestation of power.

Ver. 4.—“*Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.*” “*Woman,*” this sounds to us like the language of disrespect or reproach; but on the lips of Christ it meant nothing of the kind. Citations from ancient authors show that this was a perfectly respectful address, though to us it sounds harsh. Lange expresses the thought thus:—“The Lord answered her, that is my concern, not thine, O woman; or, in other words, let *Me* alone, leave that to *Me*; thou’rt troubled, tender-hearted one.”* “*Mine hour is not yet come.*” “Whatever our Lord intended by the fulness of these words, there was a present sense in which they were meant and received. My time for this public manifestation is fixed—is approaching; but it is not yet come.”

* See “*Life of Christ,*”

Christ seems to have had a programme—such a work for such an hour.

Ver. 5.—“*His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.*” His mother evidently understands His meaning, feels His authority, and bids the servants attend to His behests.

Ver. 6. “*And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.*” Why these six waterpots or urns were there is explained by the words “*purifying of the Jews.*” The Jews were accustomed to perform many ablutions, both of their persons and articles of furniture, both before and after meals. These earthenware urns were there for the purpose. The quantity of water in these vessels is supposed to have been about a hundred and twenty English gallons.

Ver. 7. “*Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.*” Here could be no mistake. Water was not poured into empty or partially empty wine-casks that would give to it a wine flavour, but into common earthen wine-pots. All who were there, and John who records it himself being present, give the fact without any qualification.

Ver. 8.—“*And He saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.*” “*The governor.*” This term is used only in this chapter of the New Testament. It means the person (an honoured guest) who presided at the table. The tables had three sides, and the ruler of the feast sat or reclined at the head, opposite the open space. His was the honoured post. There was usually one on his right and one on his left. At the head the one leaning towards him on his right hand (as they all reclined on the left arm) was said to “*bear on his bosom,*” (Ch. xiii. 23.) There were also three persons actually on each of the other two sides of the table.

Vers. 9, 10.—“*When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the*

water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, *Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.*" "It is clear from these words that the ruler of the feast did not know the miraculous origin of the wine, but he thought of its coming in the ordinary way from the grape. Notwithstanding this, he pronounced it better than the wine that they had previously taken, and was struck with the fact because it was contrary to general social usage. The general custom at feasts, he indicates, was to bring forth the best wine at first, when the keen tastes of the guests had not been deadened by an abundance, but here the best comes last. "This wine was not that fermented liquor which passes now under that name. All who know about the wines then used will understand rather the unfer-

mented juice of the grape. The present wines of Jerusalem and Lebanon, as we tasted them, were commonly boiled and sweet, without intoxicating qualities, such as we here get in liquors called wines. The boiling prevents the fermentation. Those were esteemed the best wines which were least strong. We may be sure that our Lord's wine would neither be *drugged*, nor mixed with deleterious ingredients, but *pure*. For *bread* He would give a *stone* as soon as for *wine* He would give *poison*." — JACOBUS.

Ver. 11. — "*This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him.*" There was no miracle before that. This miracle brought out the Divine glory of Christ. The sun of His Divinity which had been hidden by clouds now broke forth on the hearts of His disciples.

HOMILETICS.

This first miracle is to be taken as an illustration of Christ's GLORY. Wherein does His "*glory*" appear in this extraordinary incident? I think in the *sociality of His nature, the supernaturalness of His power, and the principle of His procedure.*

I.—IN THE SOCIALITY OF HIS NATURE.

Christ was a full-orbed Man. He had not a particle of the misanthrope or ascetic in His nature. He was brimful of social love and sympathy. His social nature is here revealed—

First: In sanctioning a marriage by His presence. "Marriage," says Jeremy Taylor, "is the mother of the world." Without figure it is a dictate of nature, an ordination of God; and coeval with the existence of the first human pair. Various sects have maintained the unlawfulness of marriage, from the Marcionites of old to the Shakers of modern times. Romanism even now denies its privileges to the sacerdotal class. There are thousands, too, in all ages who, having no theory as to the impropriety of marriage, are too lean natured to rejoice with those who enjoy matrimonial life. Christ, by attending a bridal feast, showed His interest in the relationship, and gave His sanction to it.

His social nature is here revealed—

Secondly: In promoting conviviality by His services. The beverage provision had run out, those entrusted with the responsibility of entertaining the guests had become anxious, and Christ

interposes by a miracle, not only to meet the emergency, but to heighten the enjoyment. John the Baptist seemed to have been of an ascetic turn. He came "neither eating nor drinking," and some of John's disciples fell into the error of imagining that all the pleasures of life were to be eschewed, and that social festivities were wrong. They foolishly thought that the most effectual way to please God was to torment their bodies and destroy their natural inclinations. Such men have existed in all ages. The presence of Jesus at this feast was a protest against this absurdity and outrage. How the social nature of Christ shone on this occasion! How His sympathies and services heightened the festive hour! Christ was ever thus. He was no recluse. He mingled with men. He visited their houses, and He sat at their feasts. Had He not been thus social would He have been an example for us? Would He have had power to attract, comfort, or redeem?

In this miracle He "*manifested forth His glory*"—

II.—IN THE SUPERNATURALNESS OF HIS POWER.

Here He exhibits a power over nature in turning water into wine. The fact was so clear that no one doubted it, and the faith of the disciples was strengthened by it. Such power over the material world He often manifested afterwards. There is no way of explaining this result apart from His supernatural energy. When nature deviates from her wonted course, our intuitions and our reason force us to recognize a supernatural agency. Nature is a vast machine, and when its Maker arrests its progress or causes it to produce an unusual result, we call it a miracle. A result is not a miracle because of the greatness or amount of power involved in its production, for there is a larger amount of power *visible* in nature every day than in any of the miracles on record. There is infinitely more power seen, as St. Augustine intimates, in the wine that comes from the vine-trees every year through the vast and complicated workings of nature than in the converting this water into wine. The miraculousness consists in its being out of the ordinary course. Three things are noteworthy here in relation to Christ's miracle—

First: The ease with which it was performed. There is no excitement, no labour. It came as the result of a calm resolve.

Secondly: The timeliness of its occurrence. When Mary spoke to Him first, He said, "*My hour is not yet come;*" an expression indicating that in His plan there was a special moment for such a work. Christ had a plan. He did not work by caprice or impulse. "The law—the programme—was written in His heart." Christ keeps the moral time of the universe. Every act of His rings out the hour of heaven's decrees.

Thirdly: The spirit of its accomplishment. Here is *independency*.

He did not, like Moses, Elias, and the apostles, look to another for power to achieve the work; the power was in Him. He did it Himself. Here is *unostentatiousness*. There is no demonstration, no aim at dramatic effect. Like God in nature, all sublimely quiet. In this miracle "*He manifested forth His glory*"—

III.—IN THE PRINCIPLE OF HIS PROCEDURE.

The narrative suggests two thoughts in relation to Christ's procedure with men—

First: He improves upon the best they have by nature. This family at Cana had water. Christ turned that water into wine. He gave it a new quality and a new flavour. This wine was *better* than water, inasmuch as one belonged to the mineral and the other to the vegetable domain. He turned the water of the human thoughts of the old prophets, historians, and apostles, into the wine of inspiration. Their thoughts were human; but He gave them a new quality, a new aroma. So it is ever. What are the institutions of Churches, the writings of theologians, the thoughts of preachers? They are mere water until He by His Spirit gives them a higher character. Christ always improves what we have by nature. There are natural virtues, but they are mere water until Christ touches them and changes them into spiritual wine.

Secondly: He improves upon the best that they have by attainment. The water which filled the urns was nature's gift, but the wine that they had drunk at the first part of the feast was that which they had obtained by their own ingenuity and work. And what does the "*governor of the feast*" say to that? "*Thou hast kept the best wine of the feast until now.*"* The wine that Christ made was the *best* wine. It does not imply that their wine was bad, but it expressed the fact that His wine was better. In this the ruler of the feast, like Caiaphas afterwards, uttered an unconscious prophecy concerning Christ. This is the rule in Christ's kingdom of souls—a continuous progress from good to better, and from better to best. How different to worldly pleasures! They pall upon the taste in the course of time. They get from bad to worse. For the Christian the better is always before him. Better, and better still, is always his motto, his destiny.

Conclusion: What think you of Christ, brother? What a noble Man! How grandly social! What a Divine Man. Condescending to deviate from His ordinary procedure in order to gratify the wish and strengthen the faith of a few poor people by turning a little water into wine! What a beneficent Worker! Ever improving upon the best we have by nature, and making even the best things we have obtained by labour, better and better still!

* See *Germes of Thought*, p. 53.

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. II.

THE FIRST MIRACLE.

"The third day there was a marriage. . ." "This beginning of miracles did Jesus."—ii. 1—11.

This first miracle suggests *four* lines of thought touching Christ's religion—

I.—IT IS SOCIAL IN ITS GENIUS.

All the *pre-Christian* religions, including the Jewish, were more or less ascetic. Most of the corrupt Christian religions also are. Christ, to show that His was sublimely social, *began* His miracles at a "*marriage feast*." Christianity is anti-ascetic. It is thoroughly human in its sympathies.

II.—IT IS ORDERLY IN ITS PROGRESS.

"*Mine hour is not yet come.*" Christ does not move *arbitrarily* nor *capriciously*. He has a "time for everything," a plan of sequence. Why dost Thou not fulfil Thy prophecies? "*Mine hour is not yet come.*" Why dost Thou not put all enemies under Thy feet? "*Mine hour is not yet come,*" &c., &c.

III.—IT IS HUMAN IN ITS INSTRUMENTALITY.

"*Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water-pots with water,*" &c. Christ does His work *for man by man*. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels," &c.

IV.—IT IS IMPROVING IN ITS ENJOYMENTS.

"*Thou hast kept the good wine until now.*" The pleasures of the *world* decrease in their enjoyment as one passes on through years; but those of *personal Christliness* increase. It is from better to better. "The end is better than the beginning."

No. XIV.

THE SOCIALITY AND RELIGIOUSNESS OF CHRIST.

"After this He went down to Capernaum, He, and His mother, and His brethren, and His disciples: and they continued there (R. V. THERE THEY ABODE) not many days. And the Jews' passover (R. V. THE PASSOVER OF THE JEWS) was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem."—ii. 12, 13.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 12—"After this." That is, after the breaking-up of the marriage party of Cana in Galilee. "*He went down to Capernaum.*" Capernaum was a city on the western shore of the Sea of Tiberias, and about ten hours' journey north of Cana. It was called His own city (Matt. ix. 1), because there He often

resided; some of His most wonderful works were wrought there; also some of His grandest sermons were delivered there. (Mark ii. 1—28; John vi. 25—70.) The neglect of its great privileges woke His most fearful denunciations, and brought on it a doom which has blotted almost every trace of it out of existence. "*He, and His mother.*"

No mention is made of His father ; in all probability he had been "gathered to his fathers." "*And His brethren.*" Who were they? Were they actual brethren, born of the same mother, or only near relatives, as cousins? or were they, as some have supposed, sons of Joseph, His reputed father, by a previous marriage? These are open questions, which the reader must decide for himself. "*And His disciples.*" Those whose names are mentioned in the previous chapter. "*And they continued there not many days.*" The time was short, because the feast of the Passover was just at hand.

Ver. 13.—"*And the Jews' passover*

was at hand." This was an institution ordained to commemorate the exemption, or passing over, of the families of the Israelites when the destroying angel smote the firstborn of Egypt; also their departure from the land of bondage. It was one of the greatest religious festivals of the nation, and Jesus attended to this, as He did to all the others. With His attendance at this Passover His public ministry may properly be said to begin. "*Jesus went up to Jerusalem.*" It is said that He went *down* to Capernaum, but here He went "*up*" to Jerusalem. The description is true geographically and socially.

HOMILETICS.

This fragment of Gospel history may be taken as illustrating the two sides of our Lord's life—the *social* and the *religious*. Notice—

I.—HIS SOCIALITY.

He goes down from Cana to Capernaum, which is a considerable distance, with his mother, brethren, and disciples, stays there a few days, and then returns, probably with them and others, up to Jerusalem (a greater distance still), in order to celebrate the Passover. Note here two things—

First: The great social advantages of Christ's friends. They are not only loving amongst themselves, as in this case, mother, brothers, and disciples, but they have Him with them. How delightful their journey must have been with "Him walking along in their midst!" We should like to have had a record of their conversation. The remarks which probably He made on the beautiful scenery, on the significance of nature, on the character of the Infinite Father, on the object of His own mission, would surely so charm their spirits as to make them unconscious of distance and fatigue. All His disciples have this privilege; He is with them always; He not only talks to them by the way, but comes into them, and makes His abode with them. Note—

Secondly: The infinite condescension of Christ's love. What a sight! God incarnate walking the dusty roads with men! He seems to have gone to Capernaum on *their* account; He could have wrought His miracles and propounded His doctrines at Cana of Galilee as well as at Capernaum, so far away. But probably these friends of His had business there. We know that Peter's home was there (Matt. viii. 14). He goes for their sake, not for His own. Anywhere would do for Him. We are made for society,

but the best of our fellow-men fail to be companions that fully meet our social requirements, and justify our confidence. In Christ we have the society our social natures want; it is wise, immaculate, self-sacrificing, and almighty. Would that men would make Him their Friend, &c. Notice—

II.—HIS RELIGIOUSNESS.

He leaves Capernaum for Jerusalem in order to attend a great *religious* festival. He makes His way for the Temple: no doubt He meets with crowds who join Him on the way to the national festival, and reveals to them His spirit, doctrines, and glory. Religiousness lay at the root of Christ's spiritual life. It was deeper than His sociality—it inspired it, it ruled it. Men were near to Him, but the Father was infinitely nearer. He loved the former compassionately, because He loved the latter supremely. There is no true social love without religion: a man will never love his fellow-man as he ought until he love the Eternal with all his heart. Love for the Great Father is the only fire that can kindle in the soul true love for men. Genuine philanthropy is but one of the many branches of the majestic tree of piety which fills the glorious universe of the good. "He that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother is in darkness even until now." "If a man say I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar."

CONCLUSION: Brother, wouldst thou have the *best* society, nay, the only society worth having? Invite Christ into thy circle, make Him the centre and inspiration, and He will journey with thee on the rough road of life. Wouldst thou thyself be a good companion to others, a benediction to thy social sphere? Let religiousness be thine imperial inspiration. Remember that He who gave a delightful inspiration to a *marriage* festivity at Cana, hastened His footsteps to a *religious* festivity at Jerusalem. Religion alone can make our society worth having. It hallows, beatifies, and immortalizes all human friendships.

No. XV.

THE IDEAL AND THE ACTUAL TEMPLE.

(At the Passover.—JOHN ii. 13—17.)

"And the Jews' passover (R. V. PASSOVER OF THE JEWS) was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: and when He had made a scourge of small cords, He drove them (R. V. AND CAST) all out of the temple, and (R. V. BOTH) the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the (R. V. THEIR) tables; and said unto them that sold doves, (R. V. TO THEM THAT SOLD THE DOVES HE SAID,) Take these things hence; make not My Father's house an house of merchandise. And His disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of Thine house hath eaten (R. V. SHALL EAT) me up."—ii. 13—17.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 13.—“*And the Jews’ passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.*” That is, went up from Capernaum. This seems to have been His first visit as a public teacher to the Holy City. “*And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves.*” “This was the most remarkable act of Jesus in Jerusalem at this time. By this act He entered upon His public ministry in the very centre of the Theocracy. He found in the temple, that is, in the precincts of the sanctuary, in the courts of the Gentiles, the dealers in oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as the money-changers sitting at their tables. These malpractices had gradually arisen from the wants, usages, and notions of the Jewish nation. Those persons who attended the festivals, or generally the Israelites who offered sacrifices, required animals for that purpose, and thus a cattle market was held. Beside that, according to Exodus xxx. 13, the Jews paid a temple tax, and in the temple coinage, a half shekel, according to the shekel of the sanctuary; hence the money-changers were needed. Probably this temple market was originally in the neighbourhood of the outer court, and gradually brought within it.”—*Lange*.

Ver. 15.—“*And when He had made a scourge of small cords, He drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers’ money, and overthrew the tables.*” His mode of procedure is remarkable. He makes a scourge of “small cords.” This scourge He wields, not against men, but against the oxen and sheep, and against these animals

naturally, not merely symbolically. It is a mark of His superiority that He drives the cattle out directly, as they had run of their own accord from the temple. In the same way He overturns the tables of the money-changers. He takes for granted that no tables ought to stand there.

Ver. 16.—“*And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not My Father’s house an house of merchandise.*” He does not deal in the same way with the doves. He commands them to be taken hence. Some see leniency here, and assign as the reason that the doves were sold for the poor. But the reason evidently was, that they were in cages, and to overturn them, as He had overturned the tables of the exchangers, would be to injure them, and they could not themselves break forth from their little prisons. Hence the command to their owners, “*Take these things hence.*” “*My Father’s house.*” Thus He announces His Messiahship, by claiming a special relation to the Great God.

Ver. 17.—“*And His disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up.*” The last clause is a quotation from Psalm lxix. When did the disciples remember this passage? Now or after His resurrection? At the latter period we think, when He Himself opened to them the Scriptures.

This cleansing of the temple is very similar to the purifying of the temple, as recorded by the other three evangelists. Was it the same event? Neander and others suppose that it was so. But against that there are many strong objections.

HOMILETICS.

As the event here recorded is so similar to that narrated (Matt. xxi. 1—16), upon which we have, in our “Genius of the Gospel” on Matthew (page 527), discoursed at length, our remarks now will be very brief. The subject of our discourse in the article referred to was the *Ideal and Actual temple*, under which heading we noticed “The Ideal temple, or the temple as it *should* be on earth;” “The Actual temple, or the temple as it *is* on earth;” and the “Cleansed temple, or the temple as it will one day *be realized* by Christ on earth.”

We shall now look at the fact in three aspects—

I.—AS THE REVELATION OF CHRIST'S GOD-HOOD.

There is an air of Divinity about the whole of His procedure. Mark—

First: His boldness! What invincible courage it required for a poor Jewish peasant to enter the capital of His country, walk into the temple, the most sacred and majestic edifice in the whole city, around which the most tender and powerful associations of His contemporaries gathered, and strike a blow at once against the habits, the interests, and the prejudices of the people! Surely there is something superhuman in this indomitable daring. Mark—

Secondly: His power. The irrational creatures fled before Him, and the traders shrunk away at the moral majesty of His looks. The "*scourge of small cords*," says one, was taken up and formed into a species of whip rather as a symbol of His command than to be used either on man or beast. The mercenary barterers would have their consciences so stricken as to be overcome with fear. Was this clearing of the temple the achievement of a mere man in the aspect of a poor Hebrew peasant? Mark—

Thirdly: His authority. Observe His calmness. There is no perturbation, but the all-serenity of self-command. Observe His influence: The desecrators fled away abashed. Observe His words—words of command: "*Take these things hence*." This is not the place for them. Remove them at once. Words, too, claiming especial relationship to the Infinite Father: "*Make not My Father's house a house of merchandise*." Who does not see more than man in all this? Are not the beams of Divinity manifest in all?

Look at the fact—

II.—AS AN EMBLEM OF CHRIST'S MISSION.

This is an emblem of the work which He has to do. To cleanse religion of all that is mercenary and selfish. He is in His temple, and He does what Malachi had prophesied of Him—"He is as a refiner's fire, and as a fuller's soap; His fan is in His hand, and He is purging His floor." What He did now at Jerusalem is His great work in the world—clearing away all worldliness from the worship of God. Ecclesiastics have filled the modern Church with worldliness. Do not men bring traffic now into churches? If they drive not the actual cattle into the sanctuary, and set not up the tables of merchandise, do they not carry the schemes of the world in their brain, and the inspiration of the world in their heart! The great want of Christendom is a work by Christ similar to that which He now wrought in the temple at Jerusalem. We know that He is amongst us, and His object is to cleanse our

temples; but as He works by moral means, the process seems depressingly slow.

Look at the fact—

III.—AS AN EXAMPLE FOR CHRIST'S DISCIPLES.

What Christ did we all should do—endeavour to drive worldliness from all the “temples” of men. The worldly spirit is antagonistic to the mind of God, and a curse to the human soul. This spirit must be exorcised. “He that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” Let us drive out the world from the temple of our own natures. Let us do it as Christ now cleared the temple at Jerusalem—boldly, authoritatively, with all the might of our manhood, and with a burning “zeal” for the house of our Father.

“Welcome, O welcome to our hearts, Lord! here
Thou hast a temple too, and full as dear
As that in Zion, and as full of sin;
How long shall thieves and robbers dwell therein?”

NO. XVI.

THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

“Then answered the Jews (R. V. THE JEWS THEREFORE ANSWERED) and said unto Him, What sign shewest Thou unto us, seeing that Thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt Thou rear (R. V. RAISE) it up in three days? But He spake of the temple of His body. When therefore He was risen (R. V. RAISED) from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this unto them; (R. V. SPAKE THIS) and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.”—ii. 18—22.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 18.—*“Then answered the Jews and said unto Him, What sign shewest Thou unto us, seeing that Thou doest these things?”* “This agrees with the demand which they afterwards made upon Him at the second cleansing. (See Matt. xxi.) They required to know by miracle His authority for such a proceeding, according to His claim in ver. 16, that the temple was His Father’s house, and He of course the Son of God.” (See my “Genius of the Gospel” on Matt. *in loco*.) What “sign?” Here is the unreasonableness of scepticism. Had these men not been visited with the most striking display of miraculous power in the clearing of the temple? Yet these cavillers ask for more; “captious men, they are like owls that hoot, and ask to see the sun at noon.”

Ver. 19.—*“Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”* “This temple.” What temple? The Jewish temple at Jerusalem—that in which He had just performed the miracle of cleansing? No; the temple of His body. “This temple.” Some suppose that when he uttered these words He pointed to His body. His body was a “temple,” inasmuch as it was the dwelling-place and meeting-place of the great God. “Destroy this temple.” This must not be taken as a command to them to murder Him. The Holy One would not encourage such an enormity. It is, I think, hypothetical. If you “destroy this temple,” and you will do it, I will raise it again in three days. He means to say, I know you will destroy this body, and when you do it, in three days after “I will raise

it up." He repeats this (Matt. xii. 39): And this prophecy has been incontrovertibly fulfilled. In all history there is no fact better attested than the fact of Christ's Resurrection.

Ver. 20.—"*Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt Thou rear it up in three days?*" This temple restored and beautified, by Herod the Great, from the second temple of Zerubbabel, was begun in the eighteenth year of his reign, reckoning from the death of Antigonus. This would be sixteen years before the birth of Christ, or twenty years before our era. And counting thirty years after that, for our Lord's age at this time, we have forty-six years. As the temple was not yet finished, the meaning is that this structure had already been so many years in the course of building. When this saying was brought up against Him by the false witnesses

(Matt. xxvi. 61), their falsity consisted in putting a different sense to His words, and really altering them also, so as to make quite a different meaning. "I am able to destroy," &c., representing Him as an enemy to the temple; and some added that He "would raise another built without hands."

Ver. 22.—"*When therefore He was risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this unto them; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.*" The "*Scripture*" here refers to the Old Testament, the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms. "*And they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.*" After what Christ had said to them (Matt. xix. 18; Luke xx. 32, 33), they saw that the Old Scriptures referred to the Resurrection of the Messiah, and they believed.

HOMILETICS.

The words point to two of the greatest facts in the wonderful life of the world's Great Redeemer, namely, His *death* and *resurrection*. They are presented here in two aspects.

I.—AS EVENTS PREDICTED.

"*Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*" The words furnish four remarks in relation to their prediction.

First: They are given as an answer to scepticism. "*Then answered the Jews and said unto Him, What sign shewest Thou unto us, seeing that Thou doest these things?*" "*What sign?*" Had they not already received a "*sign*" sufficient to convince them of His Messiahship? Had He not driven from the temple not only the sheep and the oxen, but the mercenary men who trafficked within the Holy precincts? Could the poor and despised Nazarene of His own power have thus cleared the Temple as in a moment? What less than a flash of Divinity could have struck their consciences, and sent profane and sordid traders quailing from His presence? These events—namely, Christ's death and resurrection—are here and elsewhere given as the conclusive, ultimate, and crowning proof of His Messiahship. Another remark the words furnish in relation to the events predicted here, is—

Secondly: They are given in a metaphorical garb. "*Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days*

I will raise it up." "*Destroy this temple*" is not, as we have seen, a command, but a prediction. It means you *will* destroy this temple. Christ's body was a "*temple*" in many respects. (1.) Divinity *especially built* it. The Temple of Jerusalem was built by God (1 Chron. xviii. 19). (2.) Divinity *dwelt in* it. In the Temple of Jerusalem the Shekinah, the symbol of the Divine Presence, majestically shone for ages. Christ's body was the shrine of the Eternal. In Him "*dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*" (3.) Divinity was *revealed through* it. The temple at Jerusalem was the scene of Divine manifestations, so was the temple of Christ's body. (4.) Divinity was *met* in it. The temple at Jerusalem was the place where men met with God, and communed with Him "*from off the Mercy-seat.*" Another remark the words furnish in relation to their prediction, is—

Thirdly: They are given as suggestive of His Godhood. (1.) He here predicts the fact and authors of His own death. He means to say this temple will be destroyed, and you will do it. As if He had said, "*I foresee My end: I know all about it. You are the men who will take away My life.*" This foresight certainly indicates super-humanity. (2.) He here predicts His own restoration. "*In three days I will raise it up.*" Who amongst the untold millions of men who have lived and died have ever been able to raise themselves from the dead? Christ here declares that He would, and history shows that He did so. Another remark the words furnish in relation to their prediction, is—

Fourthly: They are given but were misunderstood. "*Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt Thou rear it up in three days? But He spake of the temple of His body.*" They now, as ever, put a wrong construction on His words. They were too blinded by prejudice to perceive their spiritual import.

These two facts, therefore, in Christ's history, namely, His death and resurrection, were once mere predictions—events looming in the future, seen only by the eye of faith. But they are here presented also in a higher form, namely—

II.—AS FACTS ACCOMPLISHED.

"*When therefore He was risen from the dead.*" He did rise. No fact in history is better attested than this. He realized His own predictions. The passage points to two good purposes which these important facts answered.

First: They threw light on the revelations of the past. "*His disciples remembered that He had said this unto them.*" The facts of Christ's history light up all past Divine revelations. The old is to be understood by the new, not the new by the old. Christ's biography is at once the substance and interpretation of the Bible.

Secondly: They established confidence in the word of God. *"They believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said."* (1.) In His word as contained in the Old Testament. Though they held the Old Testament as Divine before, they never saw its meaning so clearly as now in the light of these facts. (2.) In His word, as contained in the teaching of Christ. *"And the word which Jesus had said."*

Observe in conclusion—

First: That the genuine religion of humanity rests on FACTS. It does not rest on theories, speculations, or inferences, but on facts. It has, therefore, the same foundation as all true science.

Secondly: These facts refer specially to the history of ONE PERSONALITY. Christ's death and resurrection. These are the pillars. The latter, of course, involves the former.

Thirdly: These facts if accepted interpret PROPHECIES, AND ESTABLISH FAITH IN GOD. Experience solves enigmas. Christ's history throws light on the dark domain of ancient predictions.

No. XVII.

CHRIST'S DISTRUST OF CERTAIN BELIEVERS AND HIS THOROUGH KNOWLEDGE OF HUMAN NATURE.

"Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in (R. V. DURING) the feast day, many believed in (R. V. ON) His name, when they saw the miracles (R. V. BEHOLDING HIS SIGNS) which He did. But Jesus did not commit (R. V. TRUST) Himself unto them, because (R. V. FOR THAT) He knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of (R. V. ONE SHOULD BEAR WITNESS CONCERNING) man: for He (R. V. HIMSELF) knew what was in man."—ii. 23—25.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 23.—*"Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day."* All religions seem to have their feasts. Amongst the Greeks and Romans these feasts were celebrated at the Olympian and other games. The Jews had three great feasts, the passover, the pentecost, and the feast of tabernacles. The first was held before the beginning of harvest. *"Many believed in His name, when they saw the miracles which He did."* "Miracles," whilst they philosophically cannot be considered a proof of the Divinity either of a messenger or message, were nevertheless designed and suited to promote faith: they arrested attention, roused the enbruted soul of the thoughtless, and thrilled the witnessing multitudes

with tokens of Divine power. What "miracles" they were we are not told, the other evangelists do not refer to them. We have only a fragment of Christ's voluminous biography. Probably His wondrous deeds animated them with such enthusiasm, that they were ready to proclaim Him king. They would feel that to fight on their way to Cæsar's throne, under the banner of a Man who could work such wonders, would be to fight without the possibility of defeat, and with the certainty of brilliant triumph.

Ver. 24.—*"But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them."* He read their motives and properly estimated the value of their enthusiasm. He knew the worth of the Hosannas of an empty crowd.

Ver. 25.—“*Because He knew all in man.*” Omniscience, attribute of men, and needed not that any should the Absolute One, was His.
testify of man: for He knew what was

HOMILETICS.

The verses contain two things:—*Christ's distrust of certain believers*, and *His thorough knowledge of human nature*.

I.—CHRIST'S DISTRUST OF CERTAIN BELIEVERS.

The thing to be well noted here is, that although men “*believed in His name*,” He,—“*Jesus did not commit Himself unto them.*” The sermons of some preachers abound with eulogies on “the believer,” with enumerations of the trials of “the believer,” the privileges of “the believer,” the glory that awaits “the believer;”—the word has become a cant—its aroma is offensive. There is no virtue in a certain kind of believing, but often great sin.

First: The mere TRADITIONAL believer is distrusted by Christ. How much of the popular faith in Christianity is of this sort: people accept the dogmas that have been handed down to them from their ancestors, or presented to them by their religious teachers; and their faith implies no personal inquiry, and includes no spark of conviction. Such was the faith of the Jews in the days of Christ;—such is the faith of nominal Christians throughout Christendom. It is a base thing; it is the hotbed of bigotry and intolerance.

Secondly: The mere HISTORIC believer is distrusted by Christ. There are men who believe in the genuineness of Christ's biography (and we see not how any enlightened and faithful student of history could do otherwise), as they believe in Alexander, Augustus, or Napoleon. But their faith has no influence on their character—no more influence than faith in the existence of Julius Cæsar or of any other historic character. It has, therefore, no worth in it,—it is not to be trusted.

Thirdly: The mere DOCTRINAL believer is distrusted by Christ. Belief in what Christ has taught concerning God, man, and moral obligations, has no more virtue in it than belief in the principle of astronomy, or that of any other science. What is made obvious to man's intellect, man is bound to believe.

As it was eighteen hundred years ago, it is now: many who believe in His name Christ does not trust. He has no trust in the mere *traditional, historical, or doctrinal* believer. Is there a faith then that He can trust? Yes, it is this,—a loving, practical, and unbounded confidence in Him as the infallible Guide and the Divine Redeemer of the race. “When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find such faith on the earth?” He makes all virtue to depend upon believing *in Him*; not merely in what He has said

or done, nor what people have said about Him, but *in Himself*. Notice here—

II.—CHRIST'S THOROUGH KNOWLEDGE OF HUMAN NATURE.

“He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man.” The last clause may be read thus:—“For Himself He knew man.” The magnificent edifice, amid whose halls, chambers, offices, corridors and courts we lose ourselves, is thoroughly understood by him who drew the plan: in the brain of the architect the whole existed in archetype before the foundation-stone was laid. The piece of intricate machinery, with its complication of wheels, springs, levers, convoluntary movements, fills us with perplexity: but the machinist who constructed it knows every part and pin. It is even so with MIND. The profoundest metaphysician understands it not, and hence the numerous and conflicting theories. But Christ the Architect knows it well. There are wonderful things *in* man, indefinite powers of action, innumerable germs of life, unsealed fountains of fathomless sympathies, unnumbered tribes of thought, and streams of emotion, both good and evil,—yet all are known to Christ.

From Christ's *thorough* knowledge of man, we may draw the following important truths—

First: That His sufferings and death must have been entirely voluntary. Christ's sufferings came not on Him by disease or accident as they come on us, but *by men*, and as He knew the inmost thoughts and purposes of all men, He certainly might have avoided them. His thorough knowledge of men demonstrates the voluntariness of His agonies and ignominious death. Another truth which we may draw from the fact is—

Secondly: That neither our obligations nor our trials will go beyond our capacities. As a just Sovereign, He proportions duty to power, and as a merciful Redeemer trials to strength. “He knoweth our frame.” He knows both what we can *do* and what we can *endure*. Where capacity ends obligation ceases. Another truth which we draw from the fact is—

Thirdly: That a religion which is not of the heart is of no value in His sight. All formality and insincerity are not only worthless to His eye, but *abhorrent* to His heart. “He abhors the sacrifice where not the heart is found.” Another truth which we draw from the fact is—

Fourthly: That His religious system must be in agreement with the spiritual nature and condition of man. He Who knows “*what is in man*,” and desires His system to spread, may be expected to fit it to man's nature and case. Christianity is fitted to the intellect, imagination, conscience, and heart of men, as well

as to their circumstance as sinners. Another truth which we draw from the fact is—

Fifthly: That the transactions of the Judgment Day will proceed on a thorough knowledge of all the facts of man's history. Nothing will be done in doubt or darkness.

Sixthly: That the character of Christ is transcendently pure. "It would," says *Livermore*, "be an omission here not to take notice of the benevolent use to which Jesus ever applied His knowledge of mankind. While the brilliant poet, the ambitious writer, the artful statesman, and the unscrupulous money-maker, are so often guilty of employing their acquaintance with the human heart, to further their own sensual or selfish purposes, our Holy Master touched the secret springs of our nature only to bless and heal. He lighted the pure flame of love and truth on the altar of the soul, not the smouldering fires of lust and passion. He dealt as a brother with erring brethren, and never took advantage of their weakness or ignorance. God give us grace to imitate the magnanimous trait of our high Exemplar."

No. XVIII.

THE GOSPEL SCHOOL.

(Our Lord's Discourse with Nicodemus.—JOHN iii. 1—21.)

"There (R. v. NOW THERE) was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus (R. v. UNTO HIM) by night, and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that Thou art a Teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles (R. v. SIGNS) that Thou doest, except God be with him," &c. &c.—iii. 1—21.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—"The connecting particle (*ὅτι*), with which the original introduces this scene, should not have been omitted, as the Evangelist is now going to show, in continuation of his subject, that *all* the accessions to Christ during this, His first public visit to Jerusalem, were not like those of whom he had spoken at the close of the preceding chapter. It should have begun thus—'But (or now), there was a man,' etc."—*Brown*.

Ver. 3.—"Jesus answered and said unto him, *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again*, (R. v. ANEW) he cannot see the kingdom of God." A reply this to the words of Nicodemus, singularly abrupt, emphatic, and startling. It struck a hard blow against the religion of the Pharisee. "*Verily, verily*"—an ex-

pression this found in none of the other Gospels. "*Born again*." This phrase, as will be seen, was used to introduce Nicodemus to the true spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, and by means of the terms and customs in use among the Jews, to open to him the higher sense. The Jews called those proselytes "new born" who were received by baptism in their Church—into the Messiah's kingdom, as they claimed their Church to be. But how infinitely below the true requirement was this! The true regeneration lies not in any outward ordinance—in any boasted rite, as our Lord explains to this Jewish Rabbi. It is a new birth indeed. Christ means to say, You must begin a new life: it is not reformation but renovation you want; not mending, but re-creating. "*The kingdom of God*" means the

Divine society, the grand confederation of holy souls. Man requires a new life before he can even see this kingdom; the great spirit world is hid from the unregenerate.

Ver. 4.—“*Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*” The figure of the new birth would have appeared clear enough to Nicodemus if Christ had referred to Gentile proselytes to the Jew's religion, for such proselytism was ever spoken of as a new birth; but addressed to him as a Jew it was incomprehensible. It seemed to him as absurd as for a man to enter the second time into his mother's womb.

Ver. 5.—“*Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*”

“The next answer of Jesus has three noticeable features. (1.) The imper-turbable confidence expressed in the repetition. (2.) The advance of the thought: the explanation of the birth from above as being born of water and Spirit. (3.) The entering into the kingdom of God instead of seeing it.”—*Lange*. “*Water*” here does not mean baptism, it is used as a symbol of the means of moral cleansing, it is often so used.—Titus iii. 5; 1 Peter ii. 3; Ephesians v. 26; Heb. x. 22; John v. 6—8.

Ver. 6.—“*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*” “Like produces like. Man is naturally born into a life of the senses, in which the chief objects of pursuit and interest are visible and earthly. But he is spiritually born into a spiritual life, in which the leading aim and affections are of a spiritual and immortal nature: so that by the ‘*flesh*’ is here meant what is corrupt and perishable, and by the ‘*Spirit*,’ what is pure, divine, and everlasting. Some suppose an allusion to be made here to the Jewish boast of being by blood the descendants of Abraham.”—*Livermore*.

Ver. 7.—“*Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*”

(R. V. ANEW.) It would seem as if Christ saw astonishment on the brow of this Nicodemus, and He bids him not to marvel, and goes on to re-urge the necessity of the new birth.

Ver. 8.—“*The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound (R. V. VOICE) thereof, but canst not tell (R. V. KNOWEST NOT) whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*” “The laws which govern the wind have been partially discovered, but the risings, fallings, and change in different directions many times in the day of those gentle breezes here referred to will probably ever be a mystery to us; so will be the operations of the new birth.”—*Brown*. It has been suggested that a sudden blast might have blown at this moment, and given rise to this illustration.

Ver. 9.—“*Nicodemus answered and said unto Him, How can these things be?*” “From this moment,” says *Stier*, “Nicodemus says nothing more, but has sunk into a disciple who has found his true Teacher.”

Ver. 10.—“*Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master (R. V. THE TEACHER) of Israel, and knowest (R. V. UNDERSTANDEST) not these things?*” The idea is that the high standing of Nicodemus as a master of Israel should prevent his amazement at these simple truths. He should have known that the spiritual change in the Jews was spoken of as a new birth.—Jeremiah xxxi. 31—33; Ezekiel xviii. 31; xxxvi. 26.

Ver. 11.—“*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify (R. V. BEAR WITNESS OF) that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.*” Here we have the plural for the singular—“*we speak*.” Here is the personal certitude of Christ meeting the ignorance of Nicodemus. “*We*”—John and I, the Eternal Father and I. “*We know*,” we are conscious of what we affirm, “*we have seen*.”

Ver. 12.—“*If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?*” “In reference probably to

the phrase being born again, which was in common use among the Jews, as signifying conversion from heathenism to their religion. Heavenly things, *i. e.* more advanced and spiritual views, as to the nature of the Messiah's kingdom, and the admission of the Gentiles to its privileges. You stumble in crossing the threshold of my religion, how then can you hope to penetrate its minor glories?"—*Livermore.*

Ver. 13.—"*And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.*" Local ascent and descent are not to be understood here. As a Divine Teacher Christ was in heaven as well as on earth. No mind but His Who came down from heaven ever ascended up to heaven to bring down the heavenly truths.

Ver. 14.—"*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.*" Here He rises from the earthly thing, regeneration, to the heavenly thing, His own mediation. For the historic fact here used as a symbol, see Numbers xxi. 9.

Ver. 16.—"*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in (R. V. ON) Him should not perish, but have everlasting (R. V. ETERNAL) life.*" No explanation can make these words clearer than they are: you cannot brighten the sun. "THE WORLD." Τὸν Κόσμον. This is to be taken in its widest sense. Here the Evangelist declares the love of God, the great originating cause of Christ's mission—"everlasting life"—the end of His mission. "The nature of the condemnation consists in rejecting the light and choosing darkness, not in being a Jew or a Gentile. This is the condemnation. Or it is itself a condemnation that light is come, &c. Profound disclosures of human nature are here made, which the experience of the whole world confirms. Men shrink from the light which exposes their moral deficiencies or deformities as the diseased eye from the shining of the sun. The images of light and darkness have been thought to be suggested by Nicodemus coming to Jesus by night."—*Livermore.*

HOMILETICS.

This chapter may be regarded as exhibiting a good view of the *Gospel School*. It presents to us three things connected with this School: *a distinguished student, a glorious Master, and a characteristic theology.*

I.—A DISTINGUISHED STUDENT.

Notice—

First: His religious sect. He was a "*Pharisee.*" Of all religious sects that prevailed amongst the Jews, that of the Pharisees was the most proud, sanctimonious, exclusive and influential. John the Baptist had denounced them as a "*Generation of Vipers,*" &c., Christ had warned His disciples against the leaven of their influence, and thundered at them many tremendous woes. They were the leading antagonists to the Son of God. To this sect Nicodemus belonged, as did Paul also. How interesting it is to see men breaking away from the shackles of old associations and the exclusiveness of a bigoted party. Notice—

Secondly: His civil position. He was "*a ruler of the Jews.*" He was one of the leading men of his age, a magnate in Jerusalem, a member of the Jewish Sanhedrim, the great council of the

nation. A refreshing sight is this. A man, high in the society of his age and country, invested with civil authority, seeking knowledge at the hands of the reputed son of a carpenter. I see in this a picture of what ever ought to be, and what must be, ere the destiny of the race is complete. Ignorance in worldly power and splendour bowing before intelligence in lowliness and poverty. Nicodemus had come to feel that man could not live by bread alone, that he had deeper and more vital wants. Notice—

Thirdly: His moral timidity. "*The same came to Jesus by night.*" He came "*by night*" from fear of the Jews. He was a man that lacked at this stage of his history moral courage. Indeed, this seemed to be the great defect in his character. The question which he put in the council on one occasion (John vii. 13), "Doth our Lord judge any man?" &c., indicates a sad lack of bravery. Why did he not protest in thunder instead of interrogating? The secret way afterwards in which he came to Pilate to render respect to the crucified body of Christ, shows a craven heart. He loved truth, but he feared men. Still the love of truth was sufficiently strong in him to bring him to Christ in the night. This feature in his character cannot be admired, nor must it be imitated. We should like to have seen him go in open day before thousands of his countrymen to the poor Galilean in search of truth. Notice—

Fourthly: His respectful behaviour. "*He said unto Him, Rabbi.*" This title of respect is in some places rendered "Master." He recognized in Christ a moral Lord, and he approached Him with the utmost deference. Worldliness had not so closed his eyes as to prevent him seeing intellectual and moral greatness in the forms of poverty and meanness. As a rule wisdom has ever dwelt amongst the lowly and unpopular. Notice—

Fifthly: His evident sincerity. He acknowledges at once his conviction of the Divinity of Christ's mission. "*We know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles except God be with Him.*" He does not say that no man could perform miracles without God, but he says no man can do *such* miracles as Christ had wrought. His miracles were miracles of *mercy*. His miracles were the miracles of one Whose character was *perfect*, and Whose doctrines accorded with all that was morally intuitional in human souls.

Such is the distinguished student which we here find in this Gospel School. Here he sits at the feet of Christ. "Nicodemus," says Lange, "is better than his theology; in theology he is the type of a rationalizing supernaturalism; in character he is an inquiring child involved in the prejudices of old age."

We proceed now to notice—

II.—THE TRANSCENDENT TEACHER.

Christ, the great Founder of this Gospel School, was now present, and dealt directly with this distinguished inquirer. Concerning Him, we have to notice three things:

First: The spirit He exemplifies. (1.) Here is the spirit of *faithfulness*. In reply to the inquirer there is no circumlocution, no temporizing, no attempt to make truth palatable, but with the abruptness of a spirit fired with truth, He says, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" Words suited to shake his Pharisaism to its foundation. (2.) Here is the spirit of *earnestness*. The necessity of the change He repeats *thrice* in words of fire. (3.) Here is the spirit of *certitude*. "*We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen.*"* Here is a consciousness of absolute knowledge. "What I say I know, not by the testimony of others, nor by the deduction of a fallible reason, but as a matter of direct vision from My Father." Christ said what He knew to be the truth: His doctrines were as real to Him as His own existence. Another thing indicative of his transcendent greatness is—

Secondly: The title He assumes. He calls Himself the Son of Man, and the only begotten Son of God. What does this mean?† "*The Son of Man*"—not the Son of Jew, Greek, or Roman. The Son of Man—the ideal Man. The Son of God—the only begotten Son of God. A title this, whose meaning we can never penetrate: a relation whose import we can never fathom. Another thing indicative of His transcendent greatness is—

Thirdly: The wonderful mission He claims. He claims a mission from heaven. "*No man hath ascended up to heaven,*"‡ &c. The meaning of this apparently paradoxical utterance is, that no man has got the truth by ascending to heaven: He only has got it who came down from heaven, and whose home is in heaven, even the Son of Man Himself. He claims a mission from God, to save the world. "*God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son,*" &c.‡

Such are briefly some of the indications we have here of the transcendent greatness of this Teacher sent from God, from whom Nicodemus was endeavouring to receive religious truth.

III.—THE HEAVENLY THEOLOGY.

What were the truths inculcated? They comprehend the two great cardinals of His system, which theology designates *regeneration* and *reconciliation*; in other words, a change in our moral character and in our moral relations—a subjective and an objective change. The former is developed in the first eleven verses,

* See our Notes on Chapter I. 18, also Germ on p. 71.

† See a full discourse at end of volume.

‡ See Germs, pp. 72, 73.

and the latter in the succeeding six. These doctrines are not only similar, but may be regarded as identical. In relation to the points of similarity, we notice three things. (1.) Both are indispensable. Without change of character there is no entering into the "*kingdom of God*." Without change of relation, *i. e.* reconciliation to God by faith in Christ, there is no life. (2.) Both involve the Divine interposition; the one the agency of the Spirit, whose operations are as mysterious as the "*wind*"; the other the interposition of God's only Son. (3.) Both require faith in Christ, as the Messenger of God's love. This faith is essential both to regenerate and reconcile. But the two are so vitally connected that it is scarcely philosophical to regard them apart. Certainly Christ in this passage does not regard them as distinct, but treats them as one. The subjective change necessarily ensures the objective. Regeneration is reconciliation. The soul being made right in itself is right with God, and He regards it as such. The truths which Christ taught that night will perhaps come better out by disregarding the classifications and terminologies of theological systems. What then are the general truths which Christ taught Nicodemus?

First: That there is a necessity for a radical moral change in man's character. So thorough is the change that Christ represents it as a "new birth." The change is such a revolution in the governing disposition of the soul as involves a new life, experience, and history. Without it there is no entrance into the "*kingdom of God*," the kingdom of spiritual truth, love, and blessedness. Christ intimates three things concerning this necessary change. (1.) It requires the agency of the Divine Spirit, which is *mysterious, sovereign, and mighty* in its operations. It must be accomplished by "*water and the Spirit*," and that Spirit is as mysterious as the wind which "*bloweth where it listeth*," &c. (2.) The non-understanding of it by believers in the Bible is a reprehensible matter. "*Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?*"* Thou professest to believe in the Old Scriptures, which are full of it, &c. (3.) The understanding of it is essential to the understanding of the higher aspects of Divine truth. "*If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not,*" &c.* The earthly are those which come within the sphere of human consciousness; the heavenly, those which refer to the wonderful history of Christ, as the Messenger of God's love. Another truth here taught is—

Secondly: That the principle of eternal life involved in this change comes to men through the mission of Christ. The new-born life in the soul consists undoubtedly in supreme love to God. This love gives a new experience, a new history to man.

* See *Germes*, pp. 70, 71.

It is eternal life. It is everlasting blessedness in embryo. But it comes through Christ. (1.) Through looking at Him as the believing Jew looked upon the brazen serpent in the wilderness. "*As Moses lifted up,*" &c.* (2.) Believing on Him as the Messenger of God's love. "*Whosoever believeth on Him,*" &c. This "*eternal life*" then comes to the world through Christ. He who ascended to heaven, and came down from heaven, Whose home is heaven, He brought this eternal life to the world. This was the object of His mission. "As Thou hast given Me power over all flesh (mankind), that I should give to all flesh (mankind) that which Thou hast given Me—ETERNAL LIFE." Another truth taught here is—

Thirdly: That the mission of Christ to the world is to be ascribed to the infinite love of the Father. "*God so loved the world.*" Here is an immeasurable ocean, whose depths no intellect can fathom. "*So loved,*" &c. Another truth taught here is—

Fourthly: That the world's treatment of this manifestation of infinite love determines its moral condition before God. "*He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already,*" &c.* "*This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world,*" &c. We have only given here the bare outlines of the thoughts suggested by this passage. Every passage is a fertile text, and on many of them discourses appear below.

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. III.

CULPABLE IGNORANCE.

"Nicodemus answered and said unto Him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"—iii. 9, 10.

The culpability of the ignorance of Nicodemus is seen by two facts.

I.—HE HAD GREAT OPPORTUNITIES.

He was brought up a Pharisee; he was trained in the Old Testament Scriptures; he ought to have known what spiritual renovation meant. The religious ignorance of some people is a misfortune; this man's ignorance was a crime.

II.—HE MADE GREAT PRETENSIONS.

He was a "*master of Israel.*" He professed to teach; he was, however, a mere letterist; he lived in the verbalities of truth, like many of the ecclesiastics of all ages. The language of Christ

* See Germs, pp. 72, 74.

savours of reproof. "*Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?*" Shame on thee to be ignorant of the spirit of that system in which thou hast been trained, in which thou hast assumed authority!

No. IV.

SPIRITUAL TRUTH.

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?"—iii. 11, 12.

I.—SPIRITUAL TRUTH HAS ITS ABSOLUTE TEACHER.

"*We speak that we do know.*" As if Christ had said, Truth to Me is not a matter of speculation, theory, or reasoning, it is a matter of absolute certitude. We know it, and so "*we testify that we have seen.*" Physical truth has no absolute teacher. Spiritual truth has a teacher that speaks from holy consciousness.

II.—SPIRITUAL TRUTH HAS ITS UNBELIEVERS.

"*And ye receive not our witness.*" The Sanhedrim had not admitted the testimony of John nor the manifestations of Christ. Sad that men should accept the dogmas of the fallible and reject the doctrines of the infallible. But so it has been and so it is now.

III.—SPIRITUAL TRUTH HAS ITS GRADATIONS.

"*If I have told you earthly things,*" &c.; for "earthly" read "human," for "heavenly" read "Divine." What was the *earthly* or human thing referred to? *Regeneration*. This is a matter of human consciousness. All men must have known something of moral revolution. It is a human thing, a thing that comes within human reasoning, consciousness, experience. What was the *heavenly* or Divine thing referred to? Manifestly the *interposition of Christ*. His advent to the world was the effect and expression of God's infinite love. The facts which He states in the subsequent verses are all beyond human reasoning and consciousness, they are *Divine*.

IV.—SPIRITUAL TRUTH HAS ITS LAWS OF STUDY.

He who understands it must begin at the beginning. "*If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?*" Man must understand its human side before he can appreciate its Divine. In other words, he must know the nature and necessity of a radical moral change in him before he can appreciate the goodness, the wisdom, and the interposition of Christ.

No. V.

THE UNIQUE LIFE.

"And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven,"—iii. 13.

I.—CHRIST CAME FROM HEAVEN TO EARTH.

"*He that came down from heaven.*" He had a prior existence. He was "set up from everlasting." He was in the bosom of the Father. He came down. How infinite His condescension!

II.—CHRIST WAS IN HEAVEN WHILE ON EARTH.

"*The Son of man which is in heaven.*" While He tabernacled on this earth He was still in heaven. His thoughts, sympathies, spirit were in heaven. He was in heaven, consciously in heaven, while He preached His sermons, wrought His miracles, offered His prayers, and endured His sufferings. Grand, sublimely grand was His life! Christ stands alone in the universe, there is no one like Him. *Every true teacher of the Gospel must be in heaven spiritually while he is on the earth.*

No. VI.

THE BRAZEN SERPENT AN EMBLEM OF HEAVEN'S ANTIDOTE FOR SIN.

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."—iii. 14, 15.

From this passage we infer—

I.—THAT THE ANTIDOTE PROVIDED IN THE GOSPEL IS FOR A LAMENTABLE EVIL.

The affliction from which the Jews, bitten by the serpent, suffered resembled sin in three respects. It was *imparted*—it was *painful*—it was *mortal*. It was unlike sin in three respects. It was *material*, not spiritual—it was *a calamity*, not a crime—it was *transient*, not permanent.

II.—THE ANTIDOTE PROVIDED IN THE GOSPEL ORIGINATED IN THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

The brazen serpent did not originate with Moses, or any of the Jews, but with God; it is so with the Gospel. There are many points of difference in the antidote. (1.) The one was apparently arbitrary, the other was manifestly adapted. (2.) The one was insensible to the sufferer, the other was filled with sympathy. (3.) The one was local in its aspects, the other was world wide. (4.) The one was temporary in its efficacy, the other was abiding in its influence.

III.—THE ANTIDOTE PROVIDED BY THE GOSPEL REQUIRES THE PERSONAL APPLICATION OF THE SUFFERERS.

(1.) Personal application the most *simple*. The serpent required looking at—Christ believing in. (2.) Personal application the most *unmeritorious*. There is no merit in either looking or believing. (3.) Personal application the most *indispensable*. Those who did not look died; and those who do not believe are damned. (4.) Personal application is ever *efficacious*. Every Jew that looked was healed; every soul that believes is saved.

No. VII.

LOVE.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”—iii. 16.

Here is *love* :—

I.—IN ITS PRIMAL FOUNTAIN.

Where does love originate? All streams from one fountain—God. God has a *heart*. He is not all sheer intellect. God’s heart is benevolent, not unkind. Here is love :—

II.—IN ITS HIGHEST FORM.

Love for the good and the true is beautiful, but love for enemies !—This is amazingly grand ! (1.) Here is love for guilty men :—Love for the corrupt, the criminal, the morally repulsive. (2.) Here is love for a world of guilty men :—Love for the world without any limitation. Here is love :—

III.—IN ITS MIGHTIEST STRENGTH.

Making the greatest conceivable sacrifice. “*He gave His only begotten Son.*” Who shall explain this? How omnipotent this love ! Here is love :—

IV.—IN ITS MORAL INFLUENCE.

How is this love to influence men? To influence the guilty so as to absolve them, and the enemies so as to atone them, the lost so as to save them? Simply by *faith*. *The greatest love in the world can only move a moral being by faith.*

No. VIII.

FUNDAMENTAL FACTS OF EVANGELISM.

“For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.”—iii. 17.

Christianity is built on facts. These facts are connected with a person, and this person is the Son of God. There are three facts here :

I.—THE FIRST FACT IS THIS, GOD SENT HIS SON INTO THE WORLD.

This fact implies two things. (1.) That Christ is in some sense *separate* from the Father. There is a wonderful unity, but at the same time a distinction. (2) Christ is in some sense *subordinate* of the Father. He is “*sent*” by the Father.

II.—THE SECOND FACT IS THIS, THAT GOD SENT HIS SON INTO THE WORLD NOT TO CONDEMN IT.

This is not what might have been expected. Two things might have led one antecedently to expect that if God had sent His Son into the world it would have been to damn it. (1.) The world’s wickedness. (2.) The world’s ill-treatment of previous messengers.

III.—THE THIRD FACT IS THIS, THAT GOD SENT HIS SON INTO THE WORLD TO SAVE IT.

What is salvation? It consists not in physical, intellectual, or local changes, but in the restoration in the soul of all that it has lost through sin;—lost freedom, lost harmony, lost love, lost happiness.

No. IX.

CHRISTIANITY.

“He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.”—iii. 18—20.

These verses present Christianity to us in several aspects.

I.—CHRISTIANITY AS THE GREATEST BLESSING.

It is a “*light*.” Life is a great blessing. All feel this. “Skin for skin, all that a man hath,” &c. But life without light, were it possible, would be worthless and intolerable. Moral light, light to see the eternal truths, the great God and the spiritual hierarchies, is infinitely more valuable than material light, which reveals but the shadows of the spiritual.

II.—CHRISTIANITY AS THE GREATEST BLESSING ENTERING THE WORLD.

“*Light is come into the world.*” This redemptive light was not always in the world. The world was once very dark. There were stars, or at least lunar rays, in heathen and Jewish times, but no true solar rays till Christ came, who is the “Light of the world,”—the “Sun of Righteousness.”

III.—CHRISTIANITY AS THE GREATEST BLESSING UNAPPRECIATED BY THE WORLD.

"Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Corrupt men never did, and never will, appreciate the light of moral rectitude and holiness. It reveals their loathsomeness, and kindles within them the flames of remorse. As the foul birds of night, they hide themselves from its beams.

IV.—CHRISTIANITY AS THE GREATEST BLESSING BECOMING A CURSE TO THE WORLD.

"This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world." Before the light came they were condemned and guilty, but now that the light is come, the guilt is augmented a thousandfold. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin!" The material sun becomes a curse to the burglar and the assassin when its bright beams lead to their discovery. Sinful men convert blessings into curses--this is what they are always doing. Christianity is a transcendent joy to the good. "But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." Accept Christianity, brothers! Reject it, and you act as madly as the drowning mariner who refuses to enter the life-boat which floats on the engulfing billows, touches his very hand, and comes within his reach.

No. XIX.

A TWOFOLD MINISTRY. THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST, AND THE MINISTRY OF THE BAPTIST.

(Jesus remains in Judæa and baptizes. Further testimony of John the Baptist. JOHN iii. 22—36.)

"After these things came Jesus and His disciples into the land of Judæa," &c.—iii. 22—36.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 22.—

"After these things came Jesus and His disciples into the land of Judæa; and there He tarried with them, and baptized." Who knows how many things were included in *"these things"*? We only know some; such as the baptism of Christ by John (Matt. iii. 13—17; Mark i. 9—11; Luke iii. 21, 22): His temptation of the devil in the wilderness (Matt. iv. 1—11; Mark i. 12, 13; Luke iv. 1—13): His return into Galilee, and the call of Philip and Nathanael (John i. 43—50): His first miracle at Cana (John ii. 1—11): His presence at the first Passover, the cleansing of the Temple, and His discourse

with Nicodemus at night (John iii. 1—21). All these things are recorded, but how many in His fruitful life are unregistered? *"Came Jesus and His disciples into the land of Judæa."* He was in Judæa when He conversed with Nicodemus, but it was in the city—Jerusalem. It means here that He came into the territory of Judæa as distinguished from the metropolis. *"And there He tarried with them."* It is supposed that He tarried in this Judæan district from the month of March till November or December, at least half a year. *"And baptized."* He Himself we know baptized no one (see chap. iv. 2). He baptized,

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however, by His disciples. What a king's servants do is often spoken of as done by himself.

Ver. 23.—“*And John also was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.*” John, not the Apostle and the writer of this Gospel, but the Baptist. Although he had himself baptized Christ, and knew He had entered on His ministry, he continued his work in “*Ænon.*” This word signifies a fountain, “*because there was much water there.*” ἵδαρα πολλά, “many waters.” A place of many small streams. This circumstance proves nothing for or against immersion.

Ver. 24.—“*For John was not yet cast into prison.*” “From the first three evangelists one would naturally conclude that our Lord's ministry only began after the Baptist's imprisonment. But here, about six months probably after our Lord had entered on His public ministry, we find the Baptist still at his work. How much longer this continued cannot be determined with certainty, but probably not very long. This little verse is useful in harmonizing the Gospel and determining the probable duration of our Lord's ministry.”—*Brown.*

Ver. 25.—“*Then there arose (R. V. THERE AROSE THEREFORE) a question (R. V. QUESTIONING) between some (R. V. ON THE PART OF) of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.*” The different baptizing of John and our Lord so near together naturally led to a question concerning the two. John's disciples, it would seem, started the inquiry: they were perhaps jealous of the waning reputation of their master.

Ver. 26.—“*And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest (R. V. HAST BORNE) witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to Him.*” “*All men.*” πάντες for οἱ πολλοί, very many. By an hyperbole usual in the language of those who speak under the influence of passion and prejudice.”—*Bloomfield.* The spirit, perhaps, of their language

is: “He whom thou didst honour on the banks of the Jordan, when thou didst point men to Him as the true Messiah, is now requiting thy generosity by drawing away all thy followers; at this rate thou wilt soon have no disciples at all.”—*Brown.* Perhaps they thought that as Jesus had sought baptism of John, He would become John's disciple, but instead of this He had arisen as a rival.

Ver. 27.—“*John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be (R. V. HAVE BEEN) given him from heaven.*” “It is not from man, but from heaven, that the cleansing represented by baptism and gift of the Spirit must come. No one entrusted with a commission must exceed his commission.”

Ver. 28.—“*Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him.*” Perhaps John never plainly called Jesus, Christ or the Messiah, but his language concerning Him always implied it.

Ver. 29.—“*He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.*” “The subject is here illustrated by a similitude derived from common life (as in Matt. ix. 15; Mark ii. 19), in which the Baptist compares Christ to the bridegroom at a marriage feast, and himself to the *παράνυμφος* or brideman, i. e. a friend who had been employed to negotiate the marriage, and had acted as his agent throughout the whole affair. The allusion to ἰσθηκῶς χαίρει διὰ τὴν φωνὴν τοῦ νυμφίου is variously traced. But the words are, with most probability, supposed to allude to the ceremony of the formal interview, previous to marriage, of the betrothed pair, who were brought together by the bridemen into a private apartment, at the door of which they were themselves stationed, so as to be able to distinguish any elevation of voice on the part of the future bridegroom in addressing his intended bride, from which, and from the tone of it, they would easily infer his satisfaction at the choice made for

him by them, and feel corresponding joy. The sense, then, may be thus expressed ; as at a marriage the bridegroom is the principal person, and his brideman willingly cedes to him the preference, and, rejoicing in his acceptance, is content to play an under part, so do I willingly sustain the part of an humble forerunner of Christ."

Ver. 30.—"*He must increase, but I must decrease.*" "*He increase,*" in labours, in authority, in disciples. "*Decrease:* *ἐλαττωθῆναι*, be diminished. Noble freedom from envy. An admonition to His disciples."

Ver. 31.—"*He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly*" (R. V. OF THE EARTH). "As the words in this last clause are precisely the same, they had better have been so rendered: 'He that is of the earth is of the earth;' although the sense is correctly given by one translator, namely, that those sprung of the earth, even though Divinely commissioned, bear the stamp of earth in their very work; but he 'that cometh from heaven is above all.' Here, then, is the reason why He must increase, while all human teachers must decrease. The Master cometh from above—descending from His proper element, the region of those heavenly things which He came to reveal; and so, although mingling with men and things on the earth, He is not 'of the earth,' either in person or word. The servants, on the contrary, springing from earth, are of the earth, and their testimony, even though Divine in authority, partakes necessarily of their own earthiness. So strongly did the Baptist feel this contrast that the last clause just repeats the first. It is impossible for a sharper line of distinction to be drawn between Christ and all human teachers, even when Divinely commissioned and

speaking by the power of the Holy Ghost."—*Brown*.

Ver. 32.—"*And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth* (R. V. OF THAT HE BEARETH WITNESS); *and no man receiveth his testimony*" (R. V. WITNESS). Bengel says "that John so ardently desires Christ to have all, that, what the disciples call 'all men,' ver. 26, he calls *mosa*, 'no man.'"

Ver. 33.—"*He that hath received his testimony* (R. V. WITNESS) *hath set to his seal* (R. V. TO THIS) *that God is true.*" "A thing is sealed in common life for two objects: either to render it inaccessible and to place it under seal (Matt. xxvii. 66), or to confirm it. And thus there is in Scripture a double figurative and symbolical use of sealing. On the latter application of the seal, which alone can be regarded here, rest, *e. g.*, the following passages: John vi. 27; Rom. ix. 11; 1 Cor. ix. 2; 2 Cor. i. 22; Eph. i. 13; Rev. vii. 2." —*Hengstenberg*.

Ver. 34.—"*For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God* (R. V. HE) *giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him.*" Here is a sharp line drawn between Christ and all human inspired teachers. The inspiration of the one is limited, that of the other measureless.

Ver. 35.—"*The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand.*" Here is the love of the Highest Being, for the highest object, conferring the highest gifts.

Ver. 36.—"*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth* (R. V. OBEYETH) *not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*" These two clauses agree with our Lord's commission: "He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." "*Wrath.*" God's wrath agrees with man's in nothing but repugnance to offensive objects.

HOMILETICS.

The whole paragraph may be homiletically regarded as a representation both of the *ministry of Christ and that of John the Baptist*, and we have here their agreement and their dissimilarity.

I.—THEIR AGREEMENT.

First: Both were cleansing. Christ by His disciples "*baptized*." John also "*was baptizing*."* The application of water in both cases was but a symbol of *spiritual cleansing*. It represents two great cardinal truths: (1.) The moral uncleanness of men; and (2.) The necessity of the application of a cleansing element. Baptism was nothing but a symbolic act: an impressive way of striking home these moral truths to the souls of the masses.

Secondly: Both were Divine. John the Baptist was Divinely commissioned; and Christ in a higher sense was "*sent from God*." "He came from above."

Thirdly: Both were ministering at the same time. While Christ's disciples were baptizing, John was also baptizing in Ænon near Salem; both were working near to each other at the same time. Their two ministries were like the sun and moon, which sometimes appear in the horizon at the same time, the moon sinking whilst the sun is rising. We have here—

II.—THEIR DISSIMILARITY.

John was inferior to Christ—

First: In office. (1.) He was "*not the Christ*,"* but the mere harbinger. A mere messenger preparing the way for the king. (2.) He was "*not the bridegroom*,"* but the mere friend; one to promote the union and to honour the marriage. Human souls were to be wedded not to John, but to Christ: betrothed to Him. It was John's work, as it is the work of all true ministers, to promote the wedding of souls to Christ. He was inferior to Christ—

Secondly: In influence. "*He must increase, but I must decrease*."* As the star is lost when the sun rises, John's ministry was to be buried in the splendour of Christ's. He was inferior to Christ—

Thirdly: In origin. "*He that cometh*," &c. John, like all men, was born of the flesh, and was nothing more than a man. Christ came from heaven. He pre-existed, He was above all in nature and in rank. John was inferior to Christ—

Fourthly: In truthfulness. "*What He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true*." He spoke *absolute* truth, truth so congruous with the reason, moral sense, and the conscious necessities of the soul, that it was felt at once to be true. The inward consciousness of the recipient would seal its truthfulness. John could not speak so. He was inferior to Christ—

Fifthly: In inspiration. "*For He whom God hath sent speaketh*

* See *Germes*, pp. 79, 81, 82.

the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." There is no limit either to the amount of His inspiration or to His power of imparting it. John was inferior to Christ—

Sixthly: In relationship. "*The Father loveth the Son.*" He is the Son of God. His relation to the Infinite is unique. We are all His offspring, but none His Son in the sense Christ was. John was inferior to Christ—

Seventhly: In authority. "*Hath given all things into His hand.*" Christ is invested with universal dominion. John was inferior to Christ—

Eighthly: In character. "*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*" * "*The wrath of God!*" Who shall explain this? Who shall sound the abysses of its meaning? It is higher than heaven and deeper than hell. The language accords with other passages: see Psalms ii. 12; Rom i. 18; ii. 8, 9; 2 Thess. i. 8; Rev. vi. 15, &c., &c. His character is the *one great object* of soul-saving faith: John's character was not. Faith on Him determines the destiny of souls.

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. X.

SPIRITUAL CLEANSING.

"After these things came Jesus and His disciples into the land of Judæa; and there He tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison."—iii. 22—24.

These words present to us *spiritual cleansing* in two aspects:—

I.—AS THE GREAT WANT OF MANKIND.

Christ and John were now engaged in the work of *baptizing*, and that was only a symbol of the importance of spiritual cleansing. The "washing of regeneration" is the great need of men; the most comprehensive prayer a man can utter is, "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." Without this cleansing there is—

First: No spiritual vision. Moral defilement is such a dense atmosphere around the soul, that it shuts out the sunbeam, and obstructs all true spiritual vision. Without this cleansing there is—

Secondly: No spiritual health. Moral uncleanness is injurious to soul health. As sanatorial measures are necessary to physical health, the cleansing of the heart is necessary to the health of the soul. Without this cleansing there is—

* See Hoinily on these words at end of volume.

Thirdly: No holy fellowship. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." All unclean spirits are excluded from the kingdom of purity and bliss. Spiritual cleansing is presented here—

II.—AS THE GRAND MISSION OF THE TRUE MINISTRY.

Christ and John were now engaged in this work. What does this work require?

First: The inculcation of spiritual truth. Men must believe at least two things: in the necessity of cleansing, and in the availability of the cleansing element.

Secondly: The inculcation of these truths often requires the use of symbols. Christ and John now employed the symbol of *baptism*.

No. XI.

RELIGIOUS DISPUTES.

"Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to Him."—iii. 25, 26.

These words suggest four things concerning religious disputes:—

I.—THEY ARE FREQUENTLY ABOUT MATTERS OF COMPARATIVELY TRIFLING MOMENT.

It was now about purifying—mere ceremonial. The controversies in the Church have generally been of this order, about immersions and sprinklings, priestly costumes and attitudes, &c. How much controversy there has been on the question of dipping and sprinkling! Another thing suggested concerning religious disputes is—

II.—THEY ARE OFTEN INSTIGATED BY AN INFERIOR GRADE OF RELIGIONISTS.

"There arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews." Not between Christ's disciples. So it is ever, the lower the grade of intelligence and spiritual sympathy, the more ready generally for disputation. The highest order of saints in all ages have ever avoided controversy, and shunned sects. Another thing suggested concerning religious disputes is—

III.—THEY ARE OFTEN TO BE TRACED TO SECTARIAN JEALOUSY.

John's disciples were attached to their master, and were envious of what they considered to be a rivalry, the ministry of Christ. Another thing suggested concerning religious disputes is—

IV.—THEY ARE OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH EXAGGERATION.

"The same baptizeth, and all men come to Him." A very false statement. At this time Christ's followers were very few. The

curse of British Christianity is the existence of men in it who have the spirit of John's disciples and the Jews.

No. XII.

TRUE MINISTERIAL SUCCESS.

"John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him."—iii. 27, 28.

The words suggest two things concerning true ministerial success :—

I.—IT IS FROM GOD AND NOT FROM MAN.

"*A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.*" Men make sad mistakes about ministerial success, as John's disciples did now. Crowds, excitement, noise, physical bustle, these, to many, are regarded as the criteria of ministerial usefulness; but they are false, utterly false. Growth in spiritual intelligence, in holy sympathy, in assimilation to God. Here is no usefulness apart from these, and these are ever from God, and not from man. "A man can receive nothing" of these as a mere result of his own labour. "Paul plants, Apollos waters, but God gives the increase." Concerning true ministerial success—

II.—IT SHOULD BE REJOICED IN, AND NOT ENVIED.

This seems the noble spirit of John's words. The minister who is really useful, whether he belong to "Our Church" or not, should have our strongest sympathy and best wishes; we should rejoice in his efforts, for he receives "*nothing, except it be given him from heaven,*" and everything from heaven is a blessing to the race.

No. XIII.

CHRIST'S UNION TO THE RACE.

"He that hath the bride is the bridegroom : but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice : this my joy therefore is fulfilled."—iii. 29.

Learn from this highly figurative language—

I.—WHAT CHRIST'S RELATION TO ALL SOULS SHOULD BE.

It is that of a "*bridegroom.*" A relation this implying three things. First: Mutual affection.

Secondly: Agreement of sympathy.

Thirdly: Identity of interests. As husband and wife, all souls and Christ should be one. Learn—

II —WHAT ALL MINISTERS' RELATION TO CHRIST SHOULD BE.

"*Friend of the bridegroom.*" Their work should be to make such

a representation of His unspeakable loveliness, supernal virtues, and matchless merits as to win for Him the love of all human souls.

No. XIV.

A SIGNIFICANT PREDICTION.

"He must increase, but I must decrease."—iii. 30.

Here is—

I.—A PREDICTION THAT HAS BEEN FULFILLED.

Christ has increased, and John has decreased. How? Not *personally*. Christ could never become greater in person, whilst the personality of John has perhaps been advancing in intelligence and moral nobility ever since. But *influentially*. John's influence has not waned, for he is more known and respected on this earth and in the universe now than he has ever been; but still his influence since he spoke these words, as compared with the influence of Christ, has been on the decrease. His influence, perhaps, then was greater than Christ's: the tide, however, has long since turned. His is a lake, Christ's an ocean. Here is—

II.—A PREDICTION THAT WILL BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO ALL HUMAN THINGS AND CHRIST.

First: In relation to all religious systems. All the religious systems on this earth must decrease, while Christ's thoughts will grow and spread.

Secondly: In relation to all worldly principles. The maxims that ever have and still govern the world, must gradually give way to the glorious principles of Christ.

Thirdly: In relation to all human authorities. "The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our God and His Christ."

No. XV.

THE HIGHEST LOVE.

"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand."—iii. 35.

Here is—

I.—LOVE IN THE HIGHEST BEING.

"*The Father loveth.*" The Infinite is not mere intellect, He has heart, and His heart is love. His love explains the *existence*, the *beauty*, and the *blessedness* of the universe. Here is—

II.—LOVE SET ON THE HIGHEST OBJECT.

"*The Son.*" Next to Himself the holiest and the greatest Being in the universe. It is the love of infinite complaisance and delight. Here is—

III.—LOVE CONFERRING THE HIGHEST GOOD.

"*Hath given all things into His hand.*" "All things are delivered to Me of My Father." It means the whole administration of the Divine kingdom.

No. XX.

MAN'S HOSTILITY TO CHRIST.

(*John's imprisonment and Jesus' departure into Galilee.*—MATT. iv. 12; MARK i. 14; vi. 17—20; LUKE iii. 19, 20; iv. 14; and JOHN iv. 1—3.)

"When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized (R. V. WAS MAKING AND BAPTIZING) more disciples than John, (though Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples,) He left Judæa, and departed again into Galilee. And He must needs go (R. V. PASS) through Samaria. Then cometh He to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on (R. V. BY) the well: and it was about the sixth hour."—iv. 1—6.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 1.—"*When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John.*" "The *ὅν* forms the connection with the preceding narrative, the central fact of which was, that Jesus had, during His stay in the land of Judæa, a greater following than John."—Hengstenberg.

Ver. 2.—"*Though Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples.*" Baptism is of such inferior moment, that the Heavenly Teacher leaves it to His disciples. They baptize with water, He with the Holy Ghost.

Ver. 3.—"*He left Judæa, and departed again into Galilee.*" The jealousy which He perceived rising in the Pharisees at His success, caused Him to withdraw from Judæa into Galilee. Matthew states (chap. iv. 12—17), that when our Lord heard that John the Baptist was imprisoned, He departed into Galilee. John's popularity was perhaps the great cause of his imprisonment, and as Christ's exceeded his, their indignation was waxing hot. He had been in Judæa from the time of His first Passover, about eight months: during those eight months we may rest assured He was most actively employed in carrying out His heavenly mission.

Ver. 4.—"*And He must needs go through Samaria.*" "Needs" as a matter of convenience; it was the shortest and most direct road. "Needs" as a matter of usefulness—there were souls in Samaria ripe for His influence.

Ver. 5.—"*Then cometh He to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar.*" "Sychar," or Shechem, was one of the most ancient cities of Canaan. The change to Sychar was made by the Jews to stigmatize the vices of the place, which were drunkenness, lying, and idolatry. Its more modern name is Neapolis. It was made the capital of the kingdom of Israel, in the reign of Jeroboam.

Shechem is associated with some of the most interesting events of patriarchal times. (Gen. xxxiii., xlix.; Josh. xxiv. 1—32; Judges ix. 46—49, &c.) It belonged to Ephraim. At Shechem the tribes assembled to make Rehoboam king: and here, too, the tribes rebelled. Shechem was a city of refuge. It is situated between Mount Ebal on the north, and Gerizim on the south, about thirty-four miles from Jerusalem. The modern town, which has a population of about twelve thousand inhabitants, has many fine bazaars, and two long streets running parallel with the valley. The surrounding scenery

is grand and imposing. Mahomed called it the Paradise of the Holy Land. "*Near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.*" From Gen. xxxiii. 18, we find that Jacob bought a field near Shechem; and from Joshua xxiv. 32, we find that Joseph was buried in that very field, and it is said it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.

Ver. 6.—"*Now Jacob's well was there.*" The well in its present condition is nine feet in diameter, and one hundred and five deep; when

Maundrell visited it, it had fifteen feet of water. "It is a mile and a half from Nablous, the ancient Sychar, and was lately bought by Russia, for a site for a Greek Church."—*Van Doren*. "*Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.*" About twelve at noon. Some have said this is one of the most human of all the scenes in our Lord's history. Here He is a wearied traveller, seated on the old patriarchal stone under the scorching rays of noon.

HOMILETICS.

We may regard this passage as illustrating *man's hostility to Christ*. Three facts are suggested.

I.—MAN'S HOSTILITY TO CHRIST ESCAPES NOT HIS NOTICE.

"*When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees,*" &c. He "*knew*" the malign feelings that were beginning to burn in their hearts towards Him in consequence of His great spiritual influence. Perhaps they sought to conceal their rising indignation until they should organize it into a plan to effect His ruin; but His eye peered into their hearts, and He saw the rising wrath. "*The Lord knew.*" How? By *testimony*? It is probable that His disciples would tell Him what they had heard of the malign passions of the Pharisees in the prosecution of their mission. How? By *His own observation*? Did He learn it by the flash of the eye, the frown of the countenance, or the tone of the voice? It is by testimony and observation that we learn the state of men's minds around us; but Christ knew the Pharisee mind in another and a higher way, viz. intuition. All souls are naked to His eye. He knows what is in men, "He understands their thoughts afar off." "He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man." His thorough knowledge of souls is a truth which, like the pillar of old, has two sides, one terribly dark, the other cheerily luminous. (1.) It is dark to the hypocrite. The hypocrite endeavouring to appear what he is not is labouring to do the impossible, and impiously insulting the Omniscience of Heaven. (2.) It is luminous to the genuine. The man of sincerity is sometimes misunderstood, and at other times misrepresented by his contemporaries, and often he finds it impossible to demonstrate to them the virtuous elements within him. His Master knows all, and credits him with all the goodness he has within him:

“Distance dissolves before His ray,
And darkness kindles into day.”

Another fact suggested is—

II.—MAN'S HOSTILITY TO CHRIST DEPRIVES HIM OF HIS PRESENCE.

“*He left Judæa, and departed again into Galilee.*” He leaves them not from *fear*. His courage was invincible; neither the rage of earth and hell combined could strike terror into Him Whose breath was the life of the universe. Not in *anger*; but rather in sadness and compassion. He leaves them because their state of mind was highly unfavourable to His spiritual influence. His mission was a moral one. It was to be wrought out, not by force or coercion, but by the spiritual influences of truth and love. They were at present highly unsusceptible to such influences, and His ministry amongst them would be a waste of labour. “*He left Judæa.*” What a loss! A greater loss than if some terrible calamity had stripped them of all their worldly possessions; yes, than if the sun had left their heavens for ever. What service He could have rendered, had He stayed and laboured amongst them, and had their hearts been open to His influence! He could have given them the “true liberty of the children of God,” and honours and joys as lasting as eternity.

Thus it will ever be; hostility to Christ will deprive men of His blessed services. Those who continue to repel Him He will leave sooner or later, He will turn from them for ever. Christ will not continue long with His enemies. Kind Heaven forbid that He should ever forsake us!

Another fact suggested is—

III.—MAN'S HOSTILITY TO CHRIST DEPRIVES MAN OF HIS MINISTRIES.

“*Departed again into Galilee.*” Their opposition did not cool the ardour of His zeal or weaken His determination to work out His mission. He leaves them and turns to Samaria and to Galilee. If they would not receive the blessings He offered, others might and would. Though the sun sinks from our horizon, he breaks on another hemisphere; and though Christ leaves Judæa, He ministers elsewhere. The wickedness of Judæa brought the highest good to Samaria and to Galilee. The worst of men, and the worst of devils too, contrary to their spirit and determination, often do good to others and to the universe at large. What service did Christ render to Samaria? We shall find it as we proceed.

No. XXI.

CHRIST AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA. THE TRUE WAY OF
RECLAIMING THE MORALLY DEGRADED.

(Our Lord's discourse with the woman of Samaria. Many of the Samaritans believe on Him.—JOHN iv. 4—42.)

"There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water : Jesus saith unto her, Give Me to drink," &c.—iv. 7—26.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—VER. 7.—*"A woman of Samaria."* This woman did not come from the city of Samaria, but from Sychar, an adjacent town. *"To draw water."* In the East it was, and still is, customary for women to carry water. Christianity ameliorates the condition of women. *"Give Me to drink."* It was high noon, the sun was pouring down his scorching beams, and the Holy One was thirsty. It is a remark of *Emerson*, in his Letters from the Egean, that "to him who has never panted beneath the burning sun of Asia, or trod its scorched and glowing soil, whose eye has never turned upon its cloudless skies, or shot wistfully along its parched and endless deserts, the frequent mention of water and its important uses in the Bible can come with but little weight ; and he alone who has toiled through the privations of India, or writhed beneath the withering sunbeams of the East, can enjoy in their full richness and luxury the sublime allusions of the Scriptures."

VER. 8.—*"His disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat"* (R. v. FOOD). This circumstance is mentioned probably to show how He came to ask water of her, a woman, as His disciples were not present. The city unto which the disciples were gone was Sychar, about half an hour's distance from the well.

VER. 9.—*"Then saith the woman of Samaria unto Him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans."* A Jew was not accustomed to ask a favour of a Samaritan, neither would he eat or drink with one of that nation. The reason of this, probably, was that the Samaritans were not genuine

Israelites : they were a mixed race. (2 Kings xvii. 24—41.) Then, too, they rejected all the books of the Old Testament except the Pentateuch ; also they opposed the building of the Temple at Jerusalem. (Nehemiah ii. 19 ; v. 1—2 ; vi.) They built a rival temple, too, on Mount Gerizim. (Deut. xxvii. 12.) The enmity between these people is an illustration of a general principle, that the nearer religious parties approach each other in belief and worship the more bitter are their animosities.

VER. 10.—*"Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God."* Or better : "The favour of God in granting such an opportunity." *"Who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink."* Herein He intimates that He was no common Jew, and that if she knew who He was she would feel the obligation to be on her side and not on His. *"Thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water."* That is, fresh running water. The Heavenly Teacher, with His wonted aptitude for drawing illustrations from objects around Him, here turns the conversation into a spiritual channel, and under the figure of living water reveals the spiritual blessings He came to communicate.

VER. 11.—*"The woman saith unto Him, Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep."* Travelers in the East are wont to carry bottles or buckets which, with cords, they let down into the well in order to get at the water they require. As yet she had not caught His spiritual meaning ; she was in the realm of earthly ideas, and thought only of material water, and the method of drawing it.

VER. 12.—*"Art Thou greater than*

our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?" Samaritan and Jew were one in their respect for the memory of the illustrious patriarch. Who canst Thou be to talk of giving me living water? It would seem as if an impression by this time was coming over her that she was talking to no ordinary personage.

Ver. 13.—"*Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever* (R. V. EVERY ONE THAT) *drinketh of this water shall thirst again.*" Our Lord proceeds to intensify the woman's inquisitiveness, and points to a sublimer element than lay down in the well. He does not say He is greater than Jacob, but suggests that He has better water to give than that which was in Jacob's well.

Ver. 14.—"*Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.*" Here is water, a water that allays thirst for ever—"shall never thirst;" water that is in a man. Not, like the water in Jacob's well, outside of him, but water that springs in him, the water of everlasting life. Jesus opens in the soul a never-failing spring of improvement and happiness.

Ver. 15.—"*Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither* (R. V. ALL THE WAY) *to draw.*" She has not yet extricated herself from earthly ideas, and risen to the meaning of Christ.

Ver. 16.—"*Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.*" This is His first step in granting her request—viz. an effort to convince her of her sin. He now strikes a deep chord in her nature, a chord that would ring out in her soul her past ungodly history.

Ver. 17.—"*The woman answered and said, I have no husband.*" This was no new information to Christ; He knew it, He had read her heart: all the pages in the volume of her past life were open to Him.

Ver. 18.—"*Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said* (R. V. SAIDST WELL), *I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst*

thou (R. V. THIS HAST THOU SAID) *truly.*" Christ recognizes that the five men with whom she had previously lived were, in a legal sense, her husbands, but the man with whom she was now living was in unlawful association with her.

Ver. 19.—"*The woman saith unto Him, Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet.*" All trifling on her part was over; Christ had struck home to her conscience, and she saw in Him a prophet, a Divine Teacher.

Ver. 20.—"*Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.*" Unwilling to dwell upon the sin with which her conscience now stung her, she turns to another subject, the question of worship. She broaches the great question which had been in dispute between the two nations for centuries. "*This mountain,*" that is, Gerizim.

Ver. 21.—"*Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.*" Here is an utterance of solemn earnestness. The worship of the Father was not to be circumscribed to any locality.

Ver. 22.—"*Ye worship ye* (R. V. THAT WHICH YE) *know not what.*" That is, ye Samaritans. You are ignorant of true worship! You have only accepted a part of the Divine revelation—the Pentateuch, and you have rejected the further disclosures of God by the prophets. "*We know what we worship*" (R. V. WE WORSHIP THAT WHICH WE KNOW). Here He speaks of Himself as a Jew. "*For salvation is of* (R. V. FROM) *the Jews.*" The Mosaic dispensation originated amongst the Jews, the prophets had spoken to the Jews, and the Messiah had risen from the Jews.

Ver. 23.—"*The hour cometh, and now is.*" A new period in the history of worship has come, nay, it has dawned, and now is. Worship has no more to do with special places, persons, or periods. It is rather a spiritual state than a particular service, a life than a performance. "*In*

spirit." As distinguished from form. "*In truth.*" As distinguished from unreality. "*For the Father seeketh such to worship Him*" (R. V. FOR SUCH DOES THE FATHER SEEK TO BE HIS WORSHIPPERS). The Father is at once the Object and Claimant of worship.

Ver. 24.—"*God is a Spirit.*" Or rather, God is Spirit. The reference is not to His personality, but rather to His essence.

Ver. 25.—"*The woman saith unto Him, I know that Messiah cometh.*" The Samaritans as well as the Jews looked for a coming deliverer—a Messiah. This woman participated in the general expectation. "*Which is called Christ.*" These are probably

explanatory words thrown in by the Evangelist for the benefit of his readers. "*He will tell* (R. V. DECLARE UNTO) *us all things.*" She regarded the coming Messiah not as a political conqueror, but as a Divine Teacher who would "tell us all things." "All things" pertaining to the great question of worship.

Ver. 26.—"*Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am He.*" This is the first declaration that our Lord made of His Messiahship. It is remarkable that He should have first made this announcement to a woman, and to a Samaritan. But here in solitude, and alone, He could do it without the fear of any seditious movement.

HOMILETICS.

Our subject is the *True way of reclaiming the morally degraded*. How to reach the masses so as to interest them in spiritual and eternal realities, is a question that presses on all earnest hearts, and agitates more or less most Christian Churches. Many methods are adopted, some unphilosophic, and some even immoral and degrading. The toiling millions of this country are confessedly outside of all churches, and for the most part out of sympathy with those things which are essential to spiritual culture and everlasting peace. Scheme after scheme is propounded in order to reach them, and bring these wandering sheep into the fold. Theatres are open for religious services, tales are introduced into religious journals in order to make (as is unwisely hoped) spiritual truth more palatable; ministers deliver secular lectures to the working classes, and exhaust their wit and their humour to make them interesting and attractive. In some cases, amongst the smaller brained and the more mawkish hearted of the religious world, efforts are adopted so ineffably silly as only to awaken the disgust of the more thoughtful of the working classes. Even the pulpit itself in some cases has been employed as the organ of miserable clap-trap, coarse humour, and silly jest. We may, perhaps, get at the true method by marking the way by which Christ reached this poor, degraded woman of Samaria.

I.—HE APPROACHES HER ON THE BROAD GROUND OF HUMANITY.

He did not speak to her as one of the lower classes, nor as a religious sceptic or schismatic, but He speaks to her simply as a *woman*: one inheriting human nature with all its wondrous relations, great possibilities, and deep spiritual needs. Mark here two things:

First: He asks a favour of her, and thus assures her that He does not despise her on the ground of her poverty. "*Jesus saith unto her, Give Me to drink.*" It has been said that few things so touch the degraded and despised as asking a favour at their hands. The best way to interest a poor man is not by conferring on him a favour, but by asking him to bestow one. If a man in the most elevated station of life would touch my heart and win my sympathies, he would do it more effectually by condescending to ask me a service than in generously bestowing one. His gift to me would leave me feeling the distance still between us, but my gift to him, if he entered my humble cottage and sought it at my hands, would make me feel that he stood with me on the common level of our nature. You honour a man a great deal more by receiving his favours than in conferring upon him your own. You feel often humbled in the reception of a gift, but always exalted in the bestowment of one. Modern churches reverse this order, and degrade the poor by pressing on them their gifts.

Secondly: He asks a favour of her, though a Samaritan, and thus assures her He does not despise her on the ground of her sect. He had none of the narrow prejudices or sectarian feelings of the Jew who despised the Samaritan. The idea of her sect was lost in the grand idea of her humanity. Herein we should imitate Christ; we should not speak to men as *poor*; address them as the lower classes, and with gifts try to buy them over; nor speak to them as religious errorists, Catholics, Churchmen, or Dissenters, but deal with them as men; having nothing to do with their secular or religious distinctions. Another thing observable, and commanding our attention, in His method is—

II.—HE ADDRESSED HER PERSONALLY WHEN SHE WAS ALONE.

"*His disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.*" * There is something sublimely affecting in the sight of the great Maker and Master of the race speaking to one lonely soul. Christ for some time holds a conversation with this woman, as if to Him she was a creature of transcendent importance. He sees Divinity, immortality, unbounded progress, and inexhaustible influence in one soul. In these modern times ministers seldom think it worth their while to preach to one. If when the church doors are opened for public worship there is only one lonely individual present, the service would most likely be adjourned. They can only catch inspiration in their ministry when they see a breathless crowd around them. Not so with the Great Master. The presence of a lone woman, and she a poor heretic, touched His great nature into earnestness. We lose the individual in the mass. He seems to have lost the mass in the individual. What we want now is this personal and

* See Germ, p. 91.

direct ministry. We have depended too much upon people congregating together in order to be spiritually influenced. The time has come when, if Christianity is to reach the masses, Christians must go to the individuals, meet them, if possible, alone, ply them with spiritual truths, and bring their own experiences in warm and conscious contact with theirs. Another thing observable, and demanding our attention, is—

III.—HE PROPOUNDED TO HER SALVATION IN A WAY THAT MADE HER FEEL ITS NECESSITY.

"If thou knewest the gift of God," &c., &c. He spoke to her intelligibly; He employed imagery—spoke of the well of living water. He did not talk to her in abstract language. He spoke to her suggestively. His words led her to ask, *"Whence then hast Thou that living water?"* He touched the spring of her intellect, and set her a thinking. He spoke to her impressively—*"Whosoever drinketh of the water,"* &c., &c.* So impressed was she, that she exclaimed, *"Give me this water."* Let us so speak to men—intelligently, suggestively, and impressively. Another thing observable, and demanding our attention, is—

IV.—HE SO TOUCHED HER CONSCIENCE THAT SHE FELT THE DIVINITY OF HIS MISSION.

"Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband," &c., &c. This touched her conscience, called up the memory of her sins, and prepared her, by contrition, to receive the water of everlasting life. He did not condemn her; no word of denunciation escapes His lips. He holds the mirror of her depraved life before her, bids her to look, and thus compels her to condemn herself. *"I perceive that Thou art a prophet."* Preach to men's experience, and they will perceive the Divinity of your mission. Another thing observable, and demanding our attention, is—

V.—HE GAVE SUCH A REVELATION OF WORSHIP AND OF HIMSELF AS SILENCED HER CONTROVERSY.

"Our fathers worshipped," &c., &c. She seemed full of the controversial spirit, but Christ puts an end to this—

First: By a revelation of true worship. He gives (1.) The true *Object* of worship. He is a "*Spirit*," and a "*Father*." He gives (2.) The true *mode* of worship. *"In spirit and in truth."*† He puts an end to this—

Secondly: By a revelation of His own Messiahship. *"I that speak unto thee am He."* I am the Messiah you are looking for. Thus He hushes all controversy, and the woman is reclaimed. Would that all Churches, and all Christians, would study this

* See Germ, p. 93. † See article at end of volume.

method of morally reclaiming the vast masses lying outside all Christian influence.

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. XVI.

THE HUMANITY, FREEDOM, AND HUMILITY OF CHRIST.

“Jesus saith unto her, Give Me to drink.”—iv. 7.

Observe here—

I.—THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST.

Wearied with His journey under the hot sun, He thirsted for water. He was a Man—the Son of man. “Made in all points like as we are, yet without sin.” “The Word was made flesh.” Observe—

II.—THE FREEDOM OF CHRIST.

Prejudice would have prevented any priest or Rabbi of His age and race from asking water of a woman. (1.) He appears free from the old prejudice against the *female sex*. He asks a favour of a woman. (2.) He appears free from the old prejudice of *nationality*. The Jew hated the Samaritan. (3.) He appears free from the old prejudice of *religion*. The worship of the Samaritan the old Jew loathed and deprecated. Observe—

III.—THE HUMILITY OF CHRIST.

He condescends to ask a favour of a poor, schismatic alien woman.

No. XVII.

THE DIVINITY OF SELF-HELP AND COMMERCE.

“His disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.”—iv. 8.

We infer from these words—

I.—THE DIVINITY OF SELF-HELP.

Why had the disciples now to go under the broiling sun to Sychar to buy meat? Could not their Master have supplied them by a miracle with all they required? Truly so. But He never does for men what they can do for themselves. He helps them only by stimulating their own energies. This is the wisest method of helping men. (1.) The men who are thus helped are the most *effectively helped*. They work out their own faculties, and thereby get strength and independence. (2.) The men who are thus helped become the *best helpers of others*. They have risen themselves, and they know how to stimulate and direct others on the upward path.

II.—THE DIVINITY OF COMMERCE.

They went to "*buy*." Merchandise is a Divine ordinance, and a means of grace.

No. XVIII.

SIMPLICITY SURPRISING.

"How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of Me, which am a woman of Samaria?"—iv. 9.

No act could have been more *simple* than the request of a thirsty traveller for a little water to drink, and yet this simple act struck the woman with surprise. "*How is it that Thou, being a Jew?*" What makes simplicity so surprising?

I.—ITS RARITY.

The world is denaturalized by conventionalities. Christ here did what no other Jew would have done—allowed His nature to rise superior to the miserable prejudices of His race. He wanted water and He asks for it. How beautifully simple! But the very simplicity startled this conventional woman. There has been, and still is, so much etiquette, ceremony, and masquerade amongst men, that when a real man appears, acts out his nature, and sets conventionalities at defiance, people are struck with surprise. How is it?

II.—ITS COURAGE.

It requires great courage to go against the popular. There is nothing so beautiful as simple nature. No manners so graceful as those inspired by nature, no language so eloquent as that which expresses nature in her own tones. Sad for the world that simplicity should have the power to astonish men. Let us be simple.

No. XIX.

GOD'S SUBLIMEST GIFT.

"He would have given thee living water."—iv. 10.

Learn—

I.—GOD'S SUBLIMEST GIFT.

What is that? Christ. (1.) Christ is *greater* to Him than the universe. By Him all things were created. (2.) Christ is *nearer* to Him than the universe. His only begotten Son. Learn—

II.—MAN'S GREATEST NEED.

What is that? "*Living water*." What is the "*living water*?" Moral goodness. This is like water in its origin and destiny, from ocean to ocean, from God to God in its flow and influence. Its flow

is *natural* and *constant*, its influence *refreshing* and *beautifying*.
Learn—

III.—THE WORLD'S WORST IGNORANCE.

“*If thou knewest the gift of God.*” (1.) No knowledge to man is so *necessary* as the knowledge of Christ. He may be saved without the knowledge of the sciences, but not without the knowledge of Christ. (2.) No knowledge is so *glorious* as the knowledge of Christ. It is to know the *ROOT*, the *SOURCE*, the *SOUL* of all things.

No. XX.

THE CHRISTIANITY OF CHRIST.

“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst ; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”—iv. 14.

The biography of Christ is living and life-giving. At whatever point we touch Him in the sacred page we feel a quickening impulse ; there is life in everything He does and says. That which to human eyes appears the merest incident, through His connection with it becomes a mighty epoch in history. The meeting with the woman of Samaria now at the well seemed the most fortuitous and simple affair ; yet what results grew out of it, and still grow ! It roused the Samaritan mind from the slumber of ages ; it set hundreds at once to earnest thought. We are no judges as to the magnitude of events. A spark may burn a city ; a word may convulse an empire, and change the history of the world. The words of the text lead us to consider the religion of Christ in three aspects :—

I.—AS AN INESTIMABLE BLESSING.

It is here spoken of under the figure of “*water*.” Christ employed natural objects to represent spiritual realities. Thus by attaching Divine ideas to material things, the worth even of material nature is enhanced. The lily, the vine, the bird, the water, the stars, the sun, get a new value. He made them vehicles of those great thoughts with which He came to regenerate humanity. Here He speaks of His religion as *water*. And what so valuable as *water* ?

First : It is a life-giving power. We can scarcely wonder at old Thales referring all life to water. Wherever it is found, in the floating mists, the falling shower, the placid lake, the dancing brook, the rolling river, or the rushing cataract, it is fraught with a life-giving power. So is Christ’s religion ; it is life-giving. “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and life.”

Secondly : It is a thirst-satisfying power. Physical thirst is

of all animal sensations the most painful. The Oriental traveller on the burning sands has often told the tale of its scorching anguish. Material water alone can allay thirst. And the more *simple* its form the more effective. Man's soul is fired with a spiritual thirst, his one great burning desire is for happiness. Man has sought for the allayment of this thirst in wealth, fame, pleasure, literature; but all have proved in vain,—the passion burns on. The religion of Christ alone can satisfy this thirst; it has done so in millions of instances; it is doing so now, &c.

Thirdly: It is a nature cleansing power. Water is the great cleansing power of nature. Man's soul is polluted by sin; Christ's religion is the cleansing element. It is the fountain opened for the washing away of sin, &c.

The text leads us to look at Christ's religion—

II.—AS A DIVINE COMMUNICATION.

"The water that I shall give him."

First: This godliness is imparted as the gift of Christ. He is the Giver of that system of truth that can alone produce it. In fact, He is not only the Author, but the very *substance* of the Bible. He, too, is the Giver of that Spirit, who so applies His Gospel to the heart as to make it a quickening power. It is then Christ's gift. In that great day of the feast, "Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink."

Secondly: It is imparted as the gift of Christ in connection with man's agency. "*But whosoever drinketh.*" Man must drink. The Oriental traveller will die of thirst though the crystal fountain bubble at his feet, unless he himself will drink. No one can drink for him; it is a personal act. The Gospel is the well, but men must drink of it before it can save them. The rock has been smitten in the wilderness, the refreshing streams wind along their path, and a thousand voices of mercy are heard issuing from its verdant banks: "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely."

The text leads us to look at Christ's religion—

III.—AS AN EVER-ACTING INNER LIFE.

"Shall be in him a well of water."

First: It is essentially active within. Godliness is an active principle. It is not like the sleeping lake or stagnant pool;—it is a well, a spring whose very essence is *activity*. Take away the activity of a spring and it ceases to be. The frosts of winter and the beams of summer will consume it. Godliness is activity.

Secondly: It is spontaneously active within. The spring is *free*. If you attempt to force the spring, you stir up impurities and destroy the clearness and the sweetness of the waters. You must

not attempt to meddle with the free action of religion in the human soul. British legislation has done so ere now, and it has stirred up the worst passions of the soul and inflicted a serious injury on the cause of truth.

Thirdly: It is perpetually active within. "*Into everlasting life.*" It is a principle of endless evolutions. It originates a series of delightful operations that will multiply without end. It is a law of water that it will find its own level. The well is ever springing because of its connection with the great ocean. The highest mountains cannot prevent the water from rising to its level, and the springs from bubbling up. The godly soul will ever be happily active because of its connection with God, the great ocean of life.

All this is *within*;—in you, and therefore independent of all outward circumstances. Whatever in the world leaves you,—friends, property, earthly joys,—this cannot be taken from you. You may leave the world, but you cannot leave this. You must lose your being ere you lose this. Death will tear down your earthly tabernacle; fires will devour these heavens and burn up this globe; but this will remain unhurt, amid the war of elements, the wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds. True happiness does not stream from without, but wells up within. Brother, trust not the *outward* to yield thee happiness. It cannot do so.

"How oft the world's alluring smile
Has tempted only to beguile!
It promised health—in one short hour
Perished the fair and tender flower:
It promised riches—in a day
They made them wings and flew away.
It promised friends—all sought their own,
And left my aching heart alone."—*Cunningham.*

NO. XXII.

A FOUR-FOLD THEME.

"And upon this came His disciples, and marvelled that He talked (R. V. WAS SPEAKING) with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest Thou? or, Why talkest Thou with her? The (R. V. SO THE) woman then left her water-pot, and went her way (R. V. AWAY) into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this (R. V. CAN THIS BE) the Christ? Then they went out of the city, and came (R. V. WERE COMING) unto Him. In the mean while His disciples prayed Him, saying, Master (R. V. RABBI), eat. But He said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought Him ought to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish (R. V. ACCOMPLISH) His work."—iv. 27—34.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 27.— *and marvelled that He talked with the woman.* The eighth verse informed

us that they had been away to the city to buy meat, that is, the city of Sychar, about half an hour's distance from the well. The conversation with the woman had perhaps continued during the whole of their absence. We have only the record of a fragment of the conversation. Let us be thankful for what we have. The disciples, it would seem, found Him in conversation on their return, and they wondered. Why? Because it was not only contrary to the custom of the Orientals for men to talk to women in the street, but the Jews abstained from all intercourse with the Samaritans. The Rabbis despised the female sex as utterly without knowledge. In the Talmud it is said "no one salutes a woman," and again, "he who instructs his daughter in the law is like one who acts the fool." No wonder, then, the disciples marvelled when they saw Christ talking with the woman, or rather with a woman, for such is in the original. "*Yet no man said, What seekest Thou? or, Why talkest Thou with her?*" No one dared to put a question to Him on the subject; they were too reverential to pry into His procedure or plans.

Ver. 28.—"*The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city.*" The thoughts Christ had breathed into her soon created a tide of emotions that buried for a time all thoughts of worldly things. She forgot her work, left her vessel at the fountain, and ran forth on a new mission.

Ver. 29.—"*Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did.*" She does not mean, of course, that He narrated to her every act of her life. No; strong emotions run into poetry. Christ had touched those central points in her history that brought up before her memory the leading chapters of her past life. "*Is not this the Christ?*" μήτις οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ Χριστός. "The grammatical form of this expression, which expects a negative answer, requires that it should be rendered: Is this—or rather—can this be the Christ? The woman put it thus, as if they

would naturally reply, Impossible! But beneath that modest way of putting it was the conviction, that if they would but come and judge for themselves, she would have no need to obtrude upon them any opinion of hers, which she well knew would be unworthy of attention. Thus by asking if this could possibly be the Christ, and so rather asking to be helped by them than pretending to be their teacher, she in reality drew their attention to the point in the least offensive and yet most effectual way." —Brown.

Ver. 30.—"*Then they went out of the city, and came unto Him.*" The conduct of the Jews had caused Christ to withdraw from Judæa, but here the Samaritans stream out from their city to meet Him.

Ver. 31.—"*In the mean while His disciples prayed Him, saying, Master, eat.*" Meanwhile, that is, during her absence, while she was away in the city telling out her new experience, the disciples urged Him to eat the food they had just brought with them from the city.

Ver. 32.—"*But He said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.*" The pronouns "*I*" and "*Ye*" are emphatically expressed to mark the contrast between His thoughts and theirs. They thought of the material bread, He of the spiritual.

Ver. 33.—"*Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought Him ought to eat?*" They had not yet reached His meaning, they were thinking of the material food which they considered His exhausted physical nature required.

Ver. 34.—"*Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.*" Here He explains. His whole living, His proper food and sustenance, His whole life and relish,—was to do His Father's will, as He had intimated already when a boy in the temple. It was then already more to Him than earthly parents or home.—Luke ii. 49.

HOMILETICS.

In these verses there are four subjects worthy of note.

I.—PREJUDICE CREATING WONDER.

“And upon this came His disciples, and marvelled that He talked with the woman.” What was the cause of their marvelment? An old, foolish prejudice. The tradition that it was improper for a man to talk to a woman out of doors, and especially for a Jew to hold intercourse with a Samaritan, had been accepted by them without any inquiry. They had never examined the question for themselves, they had never reached the dogma as an intelligent conclusion. Hence the high and holy converse which their Divine Master held with this woman struck them with surprise, if not with confusion. They marvelled at Him, considered it perhaps beneath His dignity and inconsistent with His high pretensions. How often prejudice acts thus; how often it causes God’s declarations and deeds to puzzle and astound! When we set up our own traditional notions as a standard by which to try the Eternal, His procedure will be always filling us with confusion. “Prejudice is a great obstruction to spiritual progress; it is like an under-current at sea, which, being stronger than the wind, resistlessly carries the vessel back; so that, instead of the mariner finding himself so many miles nearer home, he has really lost ground.” So deep and strong is the under current of prejudice in some natures that the soul, in all her endeavours to advance, is baffled and confounded.

Another thing worthy of note here is—

II.—REVERENCE LIMITING INQUIRY.

“Yet no man said, What seekest Thou? or, Why talkest Thou with her?” Though they did not understand His conduct, they did not dare to question it. Though to them it seemed improper, they were so impressed with His superior character and judgment, that they refrained from inquiry. Genuine reverence will always limit inquiry; it will not allow the intellect to interrogate the Almighty, and to pry into the decrees of heaven. The intellect reposes on a well-grounded assurance of His unerring wisdom, inviolable rectitude, and unbounded love. Reverence implies some appreciation of the infinite disparity between the thoughts and ways of God and those of man, and therefore it becomes rather a humble listener than a busy critic.

Another thing worthy of note here is—

III.—CHRISTIANITY WORKING IN LIFE.

This is seen in the conduct of the woman. The conversation which Christ had with her broke the cerements of her soul,

touched her into new life, set her on new trains of thought, and unsealed within her new fountains of emotion.

Mark how the new faith worked within her.

(1.) Emotionally. "*The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city.*" All worldly concerns, for a time, seemed buried under the rising waves of newly-evoked sentiments and thoughts. The more Divine feeling we have within us, the less we care for worldly things.

(2.) Proselytingly. "*Went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man,*" &c. A strong desire to bring others under the new influences which she now experienced grew up within her, and urged her forth as a messenger of mercy—a blessed missionary.

(3.) Religiously. She felt that He Who spoke to her was Divine. "*Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?*" She does not ask the question because she has any doubts, she knows that He is, for He has sounded the depths of her history. He had told her all things that ever she did.

(4.) Influentially. "*Then they went out of the city, and came unto Him.*" As she spoke to her townsmen and townswomen her words and looks were electric. Real earnestness wields a magic wand. A poor woman moving a city is indeed a grand sight.

Another thing worthy of note here is—

IV.—MAN FEASTING ON THE INVISIBLE.

"*I have meat to eat that ye know not of,*" &c. There are two facts which arrest our attention in reading this passage; one is an ordinary *physical* fact in human nature, and the other is a rare *moral* fact in human nature.

The *common natural* fact is the influence of emotions on the physical appetite. It would seem that Christ had been for some time without food; His disciples were anxious on this account, and "prayed Him, saying, Master, eat." His reply was, "*I have meat to eat that ye know not of.*" And afterwards He explains Himself and says, "*My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me.*" His mind was obviously so thoroughly charged and engrossed with feelings of devout joy in relation to the will of God, and the progress of His truth in the world, that the natural craving for food was for the time not experienced. It is ever so. Such is the close connection between soul and body, that strong emotions, either of a painful or pleasurable character, will overcome for a time our animal appetites. I believe that physical disease and death, as well as physical health and life, are often in the emotions. In this incident, therefore, our Saviour showed that He was very Man, "made in all points like unto us, yet without sin."

The other fact which you have here is the *rare moral* fact in

human nature. This is found in the cause of these powerful emotions. What fired and filled the heart of the holy Jesus with these all-absorbing affections? The consciousness of acting in harmony with the Divine will, the manifestation of a new life in the Samaritan mind, the indication which He saw in the multitude around Him of a rich and speedy harvest growing out of the principles which He had inculcated. Now this is a rare moral fact in human nature. It is common enough to see men's emotions overcoming for a time their physical appetites; but it is rare to see these emotions rising from such Divine considerations. The fires that kindle strong emotions in the world generally, are not spiritual and benevolent, but gross and selfish.

No. XXIII.

THE SPIRITUAL CULTURE OF THE WORLD.

"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for (R. V. THAT) they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And (R. V. FOR) herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that wheron ye bestowed (R. V. HAVE NOT) no labour: (R. V. LABOURED) other men (R. V. OTHERS HAVE) laboured, and ye are entered into their labours" (R. V. LABOUR).—iv. 35—38.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 35.—"*Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest?*" November, December, and January are the sowing seasons in Judæa, and from the seed-time to the harvest is generally about four months. "Four months to the harvest" was perhaps a proverbial expression amongst the Jews, hence our Lord rebuking says, "*Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.*" As our Lord points them to the fields, it is highly probable that it was just seed-time; and we are thus furnished with the date, to wit: that Jesus had remained in Judæa from April, when the Passover occurred, until November. "'I say' forms the antithesis to 'ye say'".—*Tholuck*. In the natural world we must wait four months—in the spiritual it is already the time of harvest. The fields were "already white." The spirit of religious inquiry was now at work in the Samaritan mind.

Ver. 36.—"*And he that reapeth re-*

ceiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal." "Since the wages of the reaper are represented as given in this world, over against the gathering of fruit unto 'eternal life,' the primary idea is, the immediate spiritual blessings enjoyed by the harvesters—the communion of the converts themselves."—*Dr. Lange*. "*That both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.*" The spiritual sower, as well as the spiritual reaper, shall have his reward. "*Together*"—at the same time, and in the same celestial scenes.

Ver. 37.—"*Herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.*" Here Christ quotes another proverb. It seems that both the Greeks and the Hebrews had such a proverb. Christ now saw in the Samaritan mind its verification.

Ver. 38.—"*I sent you to reap,*" &c. Some expositors include in the sowers here not only the old prophets, but even the heathen philosophers who disseminated the seeds of truth. "*Other*

men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours." He Himself is included in this "other men." The great teachers of past times had none of them laboured at such sacrifice and with such efficiency as He.

HOMILETICS.

The subject of these verses is *The Spiritual Cultivation of Humanity.*

The words we have written on a former page may here be quoted as an introduction to this subject.

"There are two facts which arrest our attention in reading this passage; one is an *ordinary physical fact in human nature, and the other is a rare moral fact in human nature.* The common natural fact is the influence of emotions on the physical appetite. It would seem that Christ had been for some time without food; His disciples were anxious on this account, and 'prayed Him, saying, Master, eat.' His reply was, '*I have meat that ye know not of.*' And afterwards He explains Himself and says, 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me.' His mind was obviously so thoroughly charged and engrossed with feelings of devout joy in relation to the will of God, and the progress of His truth in the world, that the natural craving for food was for the time not experienced. It is ever so. Such is the close connection between the soul and body, that strong emotions, either of a painful or pleasurable character, will overcome for a time our animal appetites. I believe that physical disease and death, as well as physical health and life, are often in the emotions. In this incident, therefore, our Saviour showed that He was very Man, 'made in all points like unto us, yet without sin.' The other fact which you have here is *the rare moral fact in human nature.* This is found in the cause of these powerful emotions. What fired and filled the heart of the holy Jesus with these all-absorbing affections? The consciousness of acting in harmony with the Divine will, the manifestation of a new life in the Samaritan mind, the indication which He saw in the multitude around Him of a rich and speedy harvest growing out of the principles which He had inculcated. With a heart bounding with inexpressible joy, He exclaims, 'Say not ye,' &c. As if He had said, 'I see the world's mind working up to higher thoughts, and worthier aims; I see how My Gospel takes hold upon the human mind: how it will win and conquer the world one day.' Now this is a rare moral fact in human nature. It is common enough to see men's emotions overcoming for a time their physical appetites; but it is rare to see these emotions rising from such Divine considerations. The fires that kindle strong emotions in the world generally, are not spiritual and benevolent, but gross and selfish."

The subject to which I invite your attention is: The *spiritual culture of our race*. The Bible frequently represents the great work of spiritual renovation under the figure of husbandry. The simplicity of the process, so far as man's agency is concerned, and the dependency of all human effort upon the gracious agency of God for success; the capability of the soul to receive, quicken, and propagate Divine truth; and other circumstances, show the appropriateness of the figure. The text suggests four considerations in relation to this work—

I.—THAT THE GREAT PURPOSE OF GOD WITH OUR WORLD IS
ITS SPIRITUAL CULTURE.

This is clear from the fact, that Christ was now absorbed in the work; and in the midst of it He says, "My meat is to do the will," &c. In chap vi. vers. 38—40, He states it more unequivocally still—"I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will." There are two ways to ascertain the will or purpose of God concerning our world. By what He *does*, and by what He *says*. *The relation which He has established between the human mind and the outward universe shows it.* We come into this world with minds capable of receiving, and naturally craving for, those impressions of the Divine existence, attributes, and claims, which nature seems organized for the very purpose of imparting. Nature is a husbandman to the soul. It is fitted to mollify its soil, it has precious seeds to impart, it has the quickening sunbeam and the fertilizing shower at its command. Moreover, the history of the *providential economy under which we are placed indicates the same fact.* Providence deals as a husbandman with the soul. It ploughs and harrows, it uproots, plants, and waters. Still more, *The mission of Christ to the world and the representations of the Bible attest the fact.* He is the "SOWER" Whom the GREAT God has sent into the world. He is come to make the moral "wilderness bloom as Eden." The Bible speaks of the Jewish people as a "vineyard," the world as a "field," and the Church as "God's husbandry."

If we look to what He *says*, we shall find that His word through every part declares, without figure, that it is His will "that none should perish, but that all should come to repentance." And by the mouth of His holy prophets He has given us a view of the Paradisaic state of our world, when His purpose shall be fully realized. On every ground, then, we are bound to conclude that God wills the spiritual culture of our race:—that this is His grand purpose in relation to it. Yes, my brother, God's will concerning thine existence here is, not that thou shouldst become a great animal, a millionaire, or even a sage, but a great, well-trained soul. If this be the Divine will, to obey God is to serve our race:—the cause of God is the cause of humanity.

II.—THAT THE SERVANT OF GOD SHOULD EARNESTLY SEIZE EVERY OPPORTUNITY FOR ITS SPIRITUAL CULTURE.

*"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."** The words imply two facts which illustrate the proposition, that it is our duty earnestly to seize every opportunity for promoting the cultivation of the race.

First: That moral seasons are not like material ones, independent of our agency. In Judæa, the husbandman was bound to wait for a fixed period—"four months"—before he could reap what he had sown. The natural seasons are independent of us. They will come whether we wish them or not. We cannot keep the winter back, we cannot retain the enchanting summer. Not so in the moral department. *"Say not ye,"* &c. Do not think or talk in the same way about *moral* seasons. You can change the temperature, you can bring on new seasons, in the moral world. You can turn the frigid winds of winter into the glowing gales of May; you can bring the moral sun to the meridian, and make it stand still to genialize the earth. "The good time coming," you may depend, will not come as the natural seasons come, independently of our efforts. We must roll the circling orbs of truth to hasten its cheerful dawn. We must create "our April day." The words imply—

Secondly: That the feeblest honest effort to improve the world will develop encouraging symptoms to persevere. The conversation which Christ now had with the woman seems to have stirred the heart of the city, and to have awakened a general spirit of inquiry. God alone knows the influence of true thoughts truly spoken; they increase the world's appetite and demand for the spiritual. The more you devoutly and honestly press Christianity upon the world, the more 'opening,' as the phrase is, the world will supply for it. In spirituals, the demand increases with the supply; the more you give, the keener the appetite, and the vaster the capacity. Hence from these two facts, it obviously appears to be our duty to seize every opportunity for promoting the moral cultivation of the world.

III.—THAT A LONG SUCCESSION OF AGENTS ARE REQUIRED FOR ITS SPIRITUAL CULTURE.

"One soweth, and another reapeth." "I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon." "Paul plants, Apollos waters," &c. The great work is not accomplished at once. What one sows, another reaps. We enter into the labours of those who have gone before, and those who succeed will take up our humble endeavours and help to work them out:—and thus on and on, to the end.

* See Germ, p. 105.

Christ entered into the labours of the prophets. The disciples entered into His labours, &c. The proverb which Christ quotes embraces a universal principle in human history applicable to every department of conduct. *One generation sows what another reaps.* It applies to *sin*. "The fathers have eaten sour grapes," &c. It applies to *civilization*. Ingenious mechanicians, intrepid patriots, enterprising travellers, earnest philosophers, religious reformers, sowed seed in their day, whose rich fruits we are now reaping in the countless arts and privileges that bless our age. But it applies especially to religion. This principle is very suggestive.

First: It suggests the moral connection of the race. Not only does the physical existence of one generation spring from the loins of another, but the moral character of one grows out of the moral heart of the other. Man transmits his principles, as well as his nature. This age is reaping what previous ages have sown, and in its turn is sowing what all coming generations shall reap.

Secondly: It suggests the slow progress of moral principles in the world. Humanity requires ages to rise to the full appreciation of great truths. Principles which were considered as the dreams of brainless visionaries in one age, in the next a few will adopt as realities; but many ages must transpire before the majority will bow to them. Thus slowly does the work go on.

Thirdly: It suggests the humble part which the individual man plays in the history of the world. If we reap, it is not what we have sown. What we sow will not appear until we are dust, and time has blotted our name from the memory of the race. We pluck a few ripe ears from the great cornfield of life, drop a seed or two, and then pass away. Humility becometh us.

Fourthly: It suggests that results are not right rules of life. We see more of the effects of other men's labours than of our own. We cannot tell what will spring up in the world and grow from what we are doing now. We must leave consequences to the Eternal;—with principles we have to do. What is right? is our question; and to follow it out will in the long run of ages be found essentially, exclusively, and for ever expedient. Let us in our short hour do the right thing, and speak the true thought.

"The truth once uttered, and 'tis like
A star new-born that drops into its place,
And which once circling in its placid round,
Not all the tumult of the earth can shake."

IV. THAT THERE IS A VITAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ALL THE AGENTS THAT HAVE EVER BEEN ENGAGED IN THIS WORK OF SPIRITUAL CULTURE.

"*He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.*"

First: They are all united in working out one common purpose. And this is the bond that unites all true workers; all follow out the same will, aim at the same object, and move by the same impulse.

Secondly: They are all united in participating in the same rewards. They shall all gather "*fruit unto life eternal*." They shall all "*rejoice together*." What is the common reward? The expression "eternal life" includes all. It is eternal, well-being. "*Rejoice together*;" eternal blessedness *together*. The true workers of every clime and age will meet. They will "*rejoice together*." From east and west, from north and south, from every tribe, and every period, they shall meet and "*rejoice together*." In that universal rejoicing there will be no under-rating of the service of the humblest, and the greatest will not glory in himself. Each will rejoice in another's labours rather than in his own, and all will ascribe their achievements to All-inspiring and Almighty love.

Brothers, let us feel that the master purpose of God with our world *is its moral cultivation*. For this the sun arises, the holy stars appear, the earth is kept in its circling path, all nature is sustained. For this Jesus appeared and wrought out His life of agony, the true men of every age and clime have toiled and prayed, and the Spirit of God is ever in earnest work. And further, let us blend our humble efforts with the mighty forces of God. The smallest effort is not lost. The coral insect that labours for an hour down in the depths of the ocean and dies, labours not in vain; others appear, begin where it left off; and thus the work goes on until in the course of ages there rises above the vast solitary wilderness of dashing waves an island world, beautiful as Eden. Thus from the humblest labours of honest souls, there will one day rise from the deep, turbid, and turbulent sea of earth's depravity, a new world of moral beauty and blessedness.

"'Tis coming, coming up the steep of time,
And this old world is growing brighter,
We may not see its dawn sublime,
Yet high hopes make the heart throb lighter.
We may be sleeping in the ground
When it awakes the world in wonder,
But we have felt it gathering round,
And heard its voice of living thunder.

'Tis coming, yes, 'tis coming!"

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. XXI.

HARVEST.

"Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."—iv. 35.

Harvest is a prolific subject for human thought; it is a many-sided theme, and from every side men may have most soul-quickening and soul-ennobling views. We shall look at it now as illustrating three great principles which are ever at work in the Divine Government. *The ripening, the compensatory, and the co-operative.*

I.—THE RIPENING PRINCIPLE IN THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT.

The fruits of the earth which have reached maturation were a few months ago in a most nascent state. From the time when the sower committed the seed to the earth up to the hour when the reaper thrust his sickle into the field of golden grain, there was a principle at work that never paused day nor night until culmination was reached. And this principle is not only at work in the vegetable kingdom, but in every other domain. It is at work in the *inorganic* realm. Astronomers tell us that our earth and the system to which it belongs are travelling to a crisis, approaching a ripened condition. It works in the *animal* realm. As the oak moves from century to century from the acorn to a point when its perfection is reached and decadence begins, all animal life passes from the embryo to an organization worn out with years. But it is in the *human* realm that we should ponder well its operations. Here it is seen—

First: In the body. From infancy to old age our bodies are ripening for the grave.

Secondly: In the character. The character of all men is ripening for a retribution, either of woe or bliss.

Thirdly: In institutions. Human institutions, whether good or bad, ripen and reach their culmination. They have their harvest. The tares are reaped and are cast into the fire of revolution. Thus, there is a ripening power at work. *Individuals* are ripening; the body for the grave, the soul for eternity. *Nations* are ripening; their end is approaching. The *world* is ripening; the harvest is the end of the world. The end of all things is at hand.

II.—THE COMPENSATORY PRINCIPLE IN THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT.

We see this principle rewarding the labourer according to the kind and the amount of his work.

First: According to the kind. What was sown has been reaped—not only the species, but the quality too. The field in harvest gives back to the agriculturist that which he gave it in

spring. Nothing different in kind. This principle acts as rigorously in the *moral* sphere. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh, of the flesh reaps corruption; he that soweth to the spirit, of the spirit reaps everlasting life." "Even as I have seen," says Eliphaz, "they that plough iniquity and sow wickedness, shall reap the same." The selfish, the sensual, the untrue, the profane, are sowing moral hemlock, and they shall reap the rankling poison.

Secondly: According to the amount. The sower who sows sparingly his seed, does not receive, other things being equal, back from nature the same as he who scattered with a more liberal hand. It is so in the *moral* department. He that soweth sparingly, reaps sparingly, &c. There are degrees in glory, and those degrees are regulated by the degrees of goodness. This retributive principle, gleaming in the harvest-field, shines everywhere through human life with more or less brightness. It is true it is dim here as compared with what it will be hereafter. Retributive justice, which is a mere star in our earthly sphere, will grow into a sun which shall flood with overwhelming brightness our eternity. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

III.—THE CO-OPERATIVE PRINCIPLE IN THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT.

In the harvest-field you have the result of a vast combination of agencies, animate and inanimate, human and Divine. The harvest demonstrates that man has been a *co-worker* with God. Had man not cultured the soil, and scattered the seeds, the golden crops would not have been here, and had not God given the sun, and dew, and shower, and genial temperature, man's industry and skill would have been vain. Indeed, even the agency of the agriculturists, though *free*, were Divine. God gave it, God sustained it, God directed it, so that to Him belongeth the praise. It is verily so in spiritual labour. "Paul planteth, Apollos watereth, but God giveth the increase."

No. XXIV.

THE WORLD'S REDEMPTIVE FAITH.

"And many of the Samaritans of (R. v. FROM) that city believed on Him for the saying (R. v. WORD) of the woman, which (R. v. WHO) testified, He told me all (R. v. THINGS) that ever I did. So when the Samaritans were come unto Him, they besought Him that He would tarry (R. v. ABIDE) with them: and He abode there two days. And many more believed because of His own word; and said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying (R. v. SPEAKING): for we have heard Him (R. v. FOR) ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, (R. v. OMITS) the Saviour of the world."—iv. 39—42.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 39.—This is a splendid commentary on the "Many of the Samaritans of that city." thirty-fifth verse, the fields are "white

already to harvest." "*Believed on Him.*" Not merely as a good man, a great prophet, or a grand philosopher, but as the Messiah, the "Saviour of the world." "The Messiah," says *Hengstenberg*, "is represented as the Saviour of the world in that one of the few Messianic passages in the Pentateuch to which the Samaritans were restricted, Gen. xlix. 50. According to which the nations shall adhere to the Shiloh, the peaceful and peace-bringer." "*For the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.*" The brief record of the conversation of our Saviour with the woman at the well of Jacob does not contain all that He had spoken to her. In that conversation as recorded He told her of her domestic unchastities, but here she seems to have informed the Samaritans that He told her all things that ever she did. He spread out the moral of her whole life before her, so that she felt He was the Omniscient One. Because of her testimony concerning His thorough knowledge of her, the Samaritans believed.

Ver. 40.—"*So when the Samaritans were come unto Him.*" This woman had invited them in the twenty-ninth verse to come to Him, and now, according to her wish, they approach Him. They are brought face to face with that wonderful Person of whom she had been speaking. "*They besought Him that He would tarry with them: and*

He abode there two days." They pray, and He answers; they make a request, and He replies. He continued two days with them. We should like to have had a record of these two days' talking and working in the city of Samaria. How many disciples did He win during those two days? It is worthy of remark, that after His resurrection, whilst we only find a few who believed in Him in other places, that He appeared to five hundred brethren in Galilee (1 Cor. xv. 6). "The field was ripe unto harvest."

Vers. 41, 42.—"*And many more believed because of His own word; and said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard Him ourselves.*" They had believed in Him to a certain degree because of the woman's word concerning Him, but now they arose to a higher faith; "*We have heard Him ourselves.*" "*And know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.*" "In the expression, ὁ σωτήρ τοῦ κόσμου, 'the Saviour of the world' is signified, the universality of the Messiah's destination. That the people actually employed this expression cannot be maintained positively; nevertheless this very designation of a universal character was, on the ground of the Old Testament prophecies, acknowledged by every pious Israelite (Luke ii. 32)."—*Tholuck*.

HOMILETICS.

The subject of these verses is *the world's redemptive faith*. The world has many faiths. Men are constitutionally credulous, and their curse is that they believe too much, rather than too little. Faith lies at the root of all human activities, institutions, pursuits; and the state of the whole world, socially, politically, and religiously, is according to its faith. All modifications in the outward life of the world must begin in an alteration of its faiths.

There is only one *redemptive* faith: faith to emancipate the soul from the bondage of prejudice, guilt, materialism, and moral depravity in all its forms, and that faith appears in these words.

Observe two things—

I.—THE GRAND OBJECT OF THE WORLD'S REDEMTIVE FAITH.

That Object is Christ. Observe here three things concerning Him.

First: He thoroughly knows all pertaining to human life. "*He told me,*" said the woman, "*all that ever I did.*" The conversation which the woman had with Him made her feel that He was thoroughly cognisant not only with all the items in her outward conduct, but with all the secret workings of her inner life. She felt that He had read her through and through, and her conclusion from the fact was that He was Divine, and the true Messiah. When she told the Samaritans His knowledge of her they seemed to believe at once in His Divinity. The object of the world's redemptive faith is One—a Person Who thoroughly understands it, knows all that it has ever done, knows its entire history from its roots, through all its ramifications.

Secondly: He is susceptible to human appeals. "*So when the Samaritans were come unto Him, they besought Him that He would tarry with them: and He abode there two days.*" He not only thoroughly knows the world, but He has a heart that inclines Him to yield to its appeals for help. The cry of Bartimeus arrested Him on His road; the entreaties of the travellers to Emmaus induced Him to turn in and tarry with them; and here the request of the Samaritans caused Him to abide with them two days.

Thirdly: He is the Restorer of mankind. "*This is Christ, the Saviour of the world.*" τοῦ κόσμου, the Saviour, not of the Jew only, but of the Gentile also; not of a class, but of all the races and sects that make up humanity.

Now this is the Object of the world's redemptive faith. It will never be saved by believing in Creeds, Churches, or Priesthoods; it must believe on *Him* Who knows it, feels for it, and came to save it. "He that believeth on Me shall be saved." Observe—

II.—THE GRAND GROUNDS OF THE WORLD'S REDEMTIVE FAITH.

These grounds are here: one is testimony, and the other is consciousness; the one is a preliminary faith, the other is a perfect faith.

First: The *initiatory* faith. This faith is built on testimony. The Samaritans believed because "*of the saying of the woman.*" In their initial faith they accepted two things: (1.) Omniscience as a proof of Divinity. The saying of the woman was, "*He told me all that ever I did.*" She felt intuitively that He Who could tell out the whole history of human life was Divine. Who but God can read the heart? Every man feels that there is no one that can know him thoroughly but the God Who made him. You have only to convince me that such a being knows all about

human life in order to establish my faith in His supernaturalness, nay, in His Divinity. They accepted (2.) The credibility of the woman's testimony. They believed what she said concerning Him was true. Why did they believe in her credibility? Because they could see that she believed. He who believes in a thing, and he only who believes in a Divine thing, has the power to inspire faith. This woman's faith was manifest in her movements, in her expressions, in the ring of her voice. She believed. The Word in her "became flesh," and was made manifest. Hence her influence. She seemed to have moved the city in a few hours. From what she said the Samaritans believed, came unto Him, and "*besought Him to tarry*" with them. Oh! the power of one earnest soul!

This initiatory faith was a faith in testimony, and here generally all faith in Christ begins: it is faith in the testimony of those who have seen and heard Him. A traditional faith is the faith of mere nominal Christians.

Secondly: The *consummating* faith. "*And many more believed because of His own word.*" This faith was (1.) Intuitive. As soon as they saw and heard Christ for themselves, they felt at once that He was the Messiah. His truths agreed with their reason and their aspirations, and His character with their ideal. They required no argument; the Incarnate Word commended itself. This faith was (2.) Direct. "*We have heard Him ourselves.*" We heard of Him through thee, thou woman of Samaria, and we intellectually accepted the fact that He is the Messiah; but now that "*we have heard Him ourselves*" we know He is. We know His voice; it chimes in with the Divine echoes of our nature. It is the voice we have been long craving to hear. This faith was (3.) Certain. "*And know that this is indeed the Christ.*" We have no doubt about it. The man who has this faith, which springs from the felt congruity of Christ with the deepest things of his soul, is independent of all other evidences, and can stand firmly against all the hostile reasonings of infidelity. He says—All your logic is worthless; "*we know that this is indeed the Christ.*"

CONCLUSION. Here, then, is the soul-redemptive faith,—faith in the all-knowing, all-loving Saviour of the world; faith grounded not merely on the testimony of others, but on the revelation of Himself to the human soul. This is the faith that is sadly lacking throughout Christendom. Traditional faith abounds, and it is often worse than useless. Oh, speed the day when God Who "commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shall shine into the heart of the world, giving it the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!"

No. XXV.

MORAL USEFULNESS.

(Jesus teaches publicly in Galilee.—MATT. iv. 17; MARK i. 14, 15; LUKE iv. 14, 15; JOHN iv. 43—45.)

“Now (R. v. AND) after two days He departed (R. v. WENT FORTH FROM) thence, and went into Galilee. For Jesus Himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. Then (R. v. so) when He was come into Galilee, the Galilæans received Him, having seen all the things that He did at (R. v. IN) Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.”—iv. 43—45.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—The only difficult question in connection with this passage is this, What does the Heavenly Teacher here mean by “country”? (Πατρις). There are several answers presented by different Biblical critiques to this question. (1.) “Galilee is to be taken in opposition to Nazareth. In this city, His own country, Jesus had no honour, but elsewhere in Galilee He was received as a prophet.”—*Lightfoot, Krafft.* (2.) “Galilee is to be taken in opposition to Judæa. Judæa was His birthplace, and so His own country, and it was also the land of the prophets: but

there He had found no reception, and had been compelled to discontinue His ministry. In Galilee, on the contrary, all were ready to honour Him.”—*Ebrard, Norton.* (3.) “Galilee is His own country, where, according to the proverb, He would have had no honour, except He had first gone to Judæa and distinguished Himself there. It was His miracles and works abroad that gave Him fame and favour at home.”—*Meyer, Alford.* We do not regard the subject of sufficient importance to canvass these conflicting views, or to advocate or propound a conclusion of our own.

HOMILETICS.

The paragraph suggests to us certain practical thoughts concerning *man's moral usefulness in society.*

I.—MAN MAY DO MUCH MORAL GOOD WITHIN A SHORT PERIOD.

“Now after two days He departed thence, and went into Galilee.” Two days Jesus spent in Samaria, and what did He accomplish spiritually within that short period? Many, we are told, “believed on Him for the saying of the woman,” and “many more believed because of His own word.” His words during that period broke the religious monotony of the Samaritans, set the minds of men to earnest and independent thinking. He won many at once to His cause, and He scattered those incorruptible seeds of truth which commenced germination at once, and which have yielded glorious harvests through all subsequent ages. The Infinite only can tell the amount of spiritual good that has resulted from Christ's ministry in Samaria during those “two days.” Every man may and ought to accomplish great spiritual good in “two days,”—not only by preaching to vast congregations and addressing multitudes through the Press, but even in a more private way—by indoctrinating the family with Christly sentiments, and distributing through the neighbourhood the “Bread of Life.” We do not want a long life

in order to be useful; in "*two days*" we may accomplish much. No man on the "great day" of trial will be able to plead the brevity of his mortal life as an excuse for not having been morally useful to his fellow-men. We may not have time enough to make fortunes, become scientific, or win fame, but we have time enough to be useful.

II.—MAN'S EFFORTS TO DO GOOD ARE OFTEN OBSTRUCTED BY A STUPID PREJUDICE.

"*For Jesus Himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.*" Christ here states a fact. Of course there are exceptions to it. Many men gain some kind of honour from their countrymen, but as a rule *prophets* do not. Home teachers are not so valued as the foreign. This is one of the great practical errors in all human society. There is no *good* reason for it. The doctrines of a teacher, whether true or false, salutary or pernicious, are independent of the country of the teacher. There are *bad* reasons for it. The prejudice springs from jealousy, envy, pride, and such vile passions.* Christ felt that this prejudice was against His usefulness, and prejudice in some form or other has been felt by every man endeavouring to do good to be one of his chief obstructions. Prejudices are fetters that enslave the intellect, clouds that obscure the vision, bolts that shut out the truth. Men in England are filled with prejudice concerning the elements of dignity, the means of happiness, the dogmas of theology, and the forms of worship.

III.—MAN'S DESIRE FOR DOING GOOD SHOULD BE THE INSPIRATION OF HIS LIFE.

Christ leaves Samaria, confronts a powerful prejudice, and enters Galilee—what for? In order to be useful. "He went about doing good." Spiritually to bless humanity was the one grand purpose of His sublime life. "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, for the night cometh, when no man can work." Such should be the grand aim of all men, and this for two reasons—

First: It is the *greatest* work. What work on earth is so Divinely grand as that of enlightening the human intellect, enfranchising the human will, purifying the fountains of the human heart, transforming the moral man into the image of God's own Son? All other occupations and enterprises are but puerilities compared with this.

Secondly: It is the *most recompensing* work. He that converteth a soul "covers a multitude of sins," wins the sympathies of immortal spirits, and secures the approbation of his own conscience and his God. The fruits of all other labours we leave behind at

* See remarks on this subject in "The Genius of the Gospel on Matthew," p. 320.

death, but from the field of spiritual usefulness we gather sheaves that will inspire us with ineffable delight when time shall be no more.

IV.—MAN'S POWER TO DO GOOD INCREASES AS HIS PAST USEFULNESS GETS RECOGNIZED.

"*The Galilæans received Him, having seen all the things He did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.*" Christ had done great things at Jerusalem, as we learn from chapter ii. 23. The Galilæans, to whom He now addressed Himself, had in the holy city witnessed the mighty wonders He had wrought, and now as He came amongst them they were prepared to receive Him, and they did receive Him. What they knew of Him disposed them to accept Him. We get power to do good amongst men as our past good works get recognized. Man's power of spiritual usefulness is cumulative; the more good he does the more his capacity for usefulness increases. There is no wearing out in the cause of spiritual usefulness. The more useful a man has been, the more useful he may yet be. His career is not like the growth of a tree, which, after its culmination, weakens and dies, but like that of the river, it becomes stronger and stronger as it proceeds to its destination.

"Be useful where thou livest, that they may
Both want and wish thy presence still.
Kindness, good parts, great actions are the way
To compass this. Find out man's want and will,
And meet them there. All worldly joys go less
To the one joy of doing kindnesses."—*George Herbert.*

No. XXVI.

THE HEALING OF THE NOBLEMAN'S SON.

(*Jesus again in Galilee, heals the nobleman's son.*—JOHN iv. 46—54.)

"So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee," &c.—iv. 46—54.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 46.—"*So Jesus came* (R. v. HE CAME THEREFORE) *again into Cana of Galilee, where He made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.*" This nobleman (βασιλικός) was probably connected with the royal household. Such as the centurion (Luke vii. 2); or Naaman. Josephus uses the term to distinguish the officers of the king from kings (as Herod), from those at Rome (Caesar). He was probably a Jew. "Some have taken this nobleman to be identical with the

centurion of Capernaum" (Irenæus, Seidler, Strauss, Baumgarten, Crusius). The office, the sick boy, the distant healing, are similar features. On the other side are these differences: (1.) The time: here, before the removal of Jesus to Capernaum; there, long after it. (2.) The place of Christ at the time: here, Cana; there, the vicinity of Capernaum. (3.) The characters: here, excited, weak, feebly believing; there, calm, confident, strong of faith. Other differences by themselves considered, might be more easily wiped away. The *υἱός* here, the *δοῦλος*

there (a distinction, however, which is not resolved by the common *παῖς*): here, the boy is a small boy, a child, ver. 49; there, a stout youth, there a Gentile; here, a miracle-believer, probably a Jew; yet these with the foregoing strengthen the difference. But the most decisive diversity is in the judgment of the Lord. The faith of the centurion He commends with admiration; the faith of the nobleman He must first subject to a trial."—*Lange*.

Ver. 47.—"*When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judæa into Galilee, he went unto Him, and besought Him that He would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.*" From what Christ had done both at Jerusalem in cleansing the temple, and at Cana in turning water into wine, this nobleman had received such an impression of Christ's miraculous power as to have inspired the hope that He would restore his son that was dying.

Ver. 48.—"*Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders.*" These two words (*σημεῖα καὶ*) are significant: the former seems to express the *supernatural* character of an act, and the latter the demonstration which is promised of a Divine power. "*Ye will not* (R. V. IN NO WISE) *believe.*" But he had believed to some extent. What but faith prompted him to come forth in quest of Christ? But his faith was very imperfect: it was only in embryo.

Ver. 49.—"*The nobleman saith unto Him, Sir, come down ere my child die.*" The matter is serious; there is not an instant to lose. "While I am speaking my child is dying." But why "*come down?*" Will not thy faith enable thee to believe that the great Messiah can do His works without being on

the spot? This thou wilt believe, however, ere the work is done.

Ver. 50.—"*Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken* (R. V. SPAKE) *unto him, and he went his way.*" "Both effects instantaneously followed; the man believed the word; and the cure, shooting quicker than lightning from Cana to Capernaum, was felt by the dying youth. In token of faith, the father takes his leave of Christ. In the circumstances this evidenced full faith."—*Dr. Brown*.

Ver. 51.—"*And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth*" (R. V. SAYING THAT HIS SON LIVED). How this intelligence must have deepened his faith, as well as flooded his heart with parental delight!

Ver. 52.—"*Then* (R. V. SO HE) *enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said* (R. V. THEY SAID THEREFORE) *unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.*" The fact, though transporting to him as a parent, did not satisfy the new craving that his growing faith had gendered within him. He desires to seek out the cause.

Ver. 53.—"*So the father knew that it was at the same* (R. V. THAT) *hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.*" Here is faith that has become so strong that it propagates itself through a whole family.

Ver. 54.—"*This is again the second miracle* (R. V. SIGN) *that Jesus did, when He was* (R. V. HAVING) *come out of Judæa into Galilee.*" Both were in connection with domestic life; the one was connected with a marriage, the other with a deathbed.

HOMILETICS.

This narrative, though short, is full of interest and deep meaning; it throws up to our view several points of thought too important not to notice with some amount of attention. One point is this—

I.—THAT THE HISTORY OF CHRIST OFTEN EXERTS A PRACTICAL INFLUENCE UPON MEN WHO ARE NOT AMONGST HIS GENUINE DISCIPLES.

There were no doubt many genuine disciples in the neighbourhood in which this nobleman lived. In "Cana of Galilee," Christ in His first miracle had "manifested forth His power," and "many of His disciples believed on Him." But this disciple does not appear to have been amongst them. The faith that prompted him to go forth in search of Christ does not seem to have been recognized by the Messiah as of much worth. The man had undoubtedly heard so many floating stories in his neighbourhood concerning our Lord that he felt that peradventure He could and would help him in his domestic emergency. Up to this point he had no strong convictions against Him, or any vital sympathy with His spirit, His doctrines, or His aims. Certain facts about His life, which to him were more or less in shadow, alone influenced him up to the point of his leaving his home in quest of Christ. Christ's name had become a power in Galilee already. A noble name is evermore a wide, unconscious, and often unacknowledged social force for good. Christ's mere history has for eighteen centuries influenced millions of men whom charity cannot rank amongst His true disciples. His history to-day throughout Christendom affects the movements and external conduct of rulers, statesmen, authors, artists, and whole classes who have no living or practical sympathy whatever with Him or His cause. Another point that presents itself here is:—

II.—THAT NO WORLDLY GREATNESS CAN SHIELD MEN FROM ANY OF THE COMMON CALAMITIES OF LIFE.

Here is a nobleman *whose son is dying*. His son "*was at the point of death*." The young have ever been disposed to imagine that their parents must sicken and die before them,—that because they are young death is afar off. The cemeteries of the world prove that the vast majority of the human race die in childhood, and that but very few live to the age of fifty. The first grave dug on earth was not dug for a father, but a son. Aaron lost two in one stroke. David followed one after another of his children to the grave; the patriarch of Uz was bereft of all his children in one short day. The agonies of the dying son were not the only sufferings in the mansion of that nobleman; his own heart was breaking, and perhaps that of his wife and children as well. Such are ordinary trials, they are the common calamities of the race. Everywhere throughout the world you will find dying children and distressed parents. This man's wealth, position, influence, could not ward off such dire events. Death dares all opposition, and knows no adventitious distinctions, treats all alike, has an

access as easy to the royal chamber as to a pauper's hut: "the rich man also died and was buried."

"If hoarded gold possess'd the power
To lengthen life's too fleeting hour,
And purchase from the hand of Death
A little span, a moment's breath,
How I would love the precious ore!
And every hour should swell my store;
That when Death came, with shadowy pinion,
To waft me to his bleak dominion,
I might by bribes my doom delay,
And bid him call some distant day.
But since not all earth's golden store
Can buy for us one bright hour more,
Why should we vainly mourn our fate,
Or sigh at life's uncertain date?
Nor wealth nor grandeur can illume
The silent midnight of the tomb."—*Thomas Moore.*

Another point that stands out in this narrative is—

III.—THAT CHRIST'S TREATMENT OF MEN DIFFERS WIDELY FROM THAT OF AN IMPOSTOR.

In a case of this kind how should we have expected an impostor to have acted? Nay, how should we have expected even an ordinary religious teacher to have acted?

First: We should have expected that He would have dealt somewhat obsequiously with this nobleman. To say nothing of an impostor, if a "*nobleman*" were to enter some of our chapels, how would the modern minister be likely to act towards him? Would there be no fawning, no servile homage? Alas! there are popular preachers not unknown to us who follow the great as dogs their masters.

Secondly: We should have expected that He would have acceded at once to the request of this nobleman. Were a nobleman to ask a favour of some religious teachers which they could grant even with much inconvenience to themselves, they would render it at once with a proud exultation. Their vanity would be so much flattered that they would not only grant the boon in a moment, but emblazon the act as one of the most radiant incidents of their lives.

Thirdly: We should have expected that He would have looked for some compensation for any service that He might render to the nobleman. Few noblemen would feel that they would insult a religious teacher by rendering some tangible acknowledgment for services, and but few teachers would fail to look for such a manifestation. Naaman offered remuneration, nor were Elijah and Elisha above accepting acknowledgment for their services. But how stands the matter in relation to Christ as

indicated in this incident? Did the humble Galilæan fall down before the nobleman when he appeared? Not He; but thundered in his ears a reproof, "*Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.*" Did He accede to his request at once? No; He seemed to repel him, and hence the nobleman became more importunate. "*Sir, come down ere my child die.*" Thus He acted too with Nicodemus, the Syri-Phœnicæan mother, and others. He showed no servile anxiety to win adherents to His cause. Did He expect acknowledgment for His services? No. It is remarkable that not only do you not find in any part of the history of Christ a case where He asked for compensation for His numerous services, but what is more striking still, you will not find one who dared to insult Him by making such an offer. Strange that this nobleman, with the wonted generosity of the East, did not suggest remuneration; but he saw a moral majesty sitting upon the brow of that poor Galilæan that repelled the idea.

A little incident like this brings out to me Jesus of Nazareth in sublime contrast to all the religious teachers of the world ancient and modern, heathen and Christian. He stands above them, high as the ever-burning stars above the flickering gas-lights of our streets.

Another point that stands out in this narrative is—

IV.—THAT A GENUINE CONFIDENCE IN CHRIST HAS ITS PROGRESSIVE GROWTH.

We find faith in this nobleman in three distinct stages—

First: In leaving his home to meet Christ. Unless he had possessed some amount of confidence in the capability of Christ to heal his son, would he have left his dying boy and gone out in search of Him? There was faith in germ.

Secondly: In leaving Christ to return to his home. "*Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken, and he went his way.*" Up to this time he had not believed that Christ could cure his son unless He went to the spot. Now he believed in that: "*Go thy way; thy son liveth.*" It is quite conceivable that on his way home he might have some misgivings, some doubt, as to whether the cure had taken place or not. Still he believed.

Thirdly: In influencing at once his household. On meeting the servants who told him that his son was living, and inquiring the hour when he began to mend, he found that the fever left the son the very hour at which Jesus spoke the words, "*Thy son liveth.*"

Here was another stage in his faith. Its roots must have struck deeply with this intelligence. So strong was his faith now, that he

converted the whole household. Faith begets faith. In truth, a man must believe before he can make believers.

Thus genuine faith is progressive; it has the blade, the ear, and the full corn in the ear, and the full corn can multiply as in the case of the nobleman's family.

Another point that stands out in this narrative is—

V.—THAT TRUE PRAYER CAN BRING TO THE SUPPLIANT SUPERNATURAL RELIEF.

Here is the prayer: "*He besought Him that He would come down and heal his son,*" and after an apparent rebuff it is repeated, "*Sir, come down ere my child die.*" Here is the relief: "*Thy son liveth,*" and the relief is obviously supernatural. Who could doubt this miracle? "It was performed at several miles distance, upon a person whom He had never seen, and where, therefore, there was no shadow of pretence for saying there was collusion or imposture. It satisfied the father of the child, who left him at the point of death. It satisfied those who remained at home and saw how instantaneously he recovered; and it ought to satisfy us, who live in this distant age and quarter of the world, that Christ by Divine power wrought this miracle, although we have not been witnesses to its effects."

Now prayer wrought this supernatural result. Indeed I scarcely know whether I should use the word supernatural, for as nature far transcends the reach of the greatest intelligence, and as there are confessedly elements at work both in the world of matter and the world of mind, which none of our philosophers can explain or even detect, it may turn out that what we call supernatural is only natural after all, and that Christ now sent relief to this young man through some regular law that has yet to be discovered. Modern scientists aver that the doctrine of answers to prayers is an absurdity only to be entertained by the ignorant and superstitious of mankind. They, from the lofty heights to which their scientific genius has lifted them, regard with supercilious compassion, if not with contempt, those who believe in the efficacy of prayer. Whilst upon me, as a believer in the power of prayer, they look down with scorn, I, in all sincerity, look up to them with reverence and thanks. The *true* Church of Christ, which can only live in the sun of intelligence, as well as the great world at large, owe them a deep and ever-increasing debt of gratitude. Their discoveries have thrown floods of light upon the pages of our Bible, and most of the arts that bless and adorn the civilized world must be traced to the results of their inquiries. Albeit, I fail to discover their scientific wisdom in their scoffings at prayer. Do they say that the "established order of nature" stands immovably against the doctrine of the efficacy of human supplication? Then I ask, how

much of nature has come under the scrutiny of their own observation? Is it a yard as compared with an acre, or an acre as compared with a yard? I care not which, but ask, May it not be that just in the area, whether large or small, lying outside their personal observation, there may be natural phenomena not in harmony with their ideas of the established order of things?

Moreover, on the assumption that there is an intelligent First Cause pervading all space and permeating all existences, the force of all forces, the spring of all activities, is it not to the last degree absurd and presumptuous to deny the possibility of answers to prayers? And still yet, I inquire, is not the physical condition of mankind always more or less dependent upon the ideas that influence them? Are not human ideas the germs of all human institutions and the mainspring of all human activities? If so, you have only to operate on man's ideas in order to affect his physical condition. Is there anything, therefore, absurd in supposing that God, through prayer, can or does influence human ideas? But why reason on the subject, when the Bible, whose authority I hold Divine, abounds both with the assurance and examples of the fact that the "effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much"?

Where, it has been asked, is the necessity for prayer, since the great God is too loving to require persuasion, too intelligent to require information concerning our wants? Can prayer make the Infinitely Merciful more kind, the Omniscient more intelligent? "God," says a modern author, "undoubtedly knows all our wants; but that is not sufficient; we must know them ourselves, and feel our need of having them supplied, for the supply to be a real benefit to us." We all know that the value of a gift increases in the same ratio as the power of the recipient to appreciate it. Suppose a physician gave some medicine to two persons, one of whom felt himself dying, and who came entreating help; the other, although in exactly the same condition, was unconscious of it, and took the medicine merely to honour the doctor. The bodies of both may perhaps be equally influenced, but will their minds? The one will depart profoundly grateful, but the other self-complacent at his own supposed kindness of disposition.

"There is an eye that never sleeps
Beneath the wing of night;
There is an ear that never shuts
When smile the beams of light;
There is an arm that never tires
When human strength gives way;
There is a love that never fails
When earthly loves decay.
That eye is fixed on seraphs' throng,
That ear is filled with angels' song;
That arm upholds the world on high;

That love is throned beyond the sky.
 But there's a power which man can wield
 When mortal aid is vain,
 That eye, that arm, that love to reach,
 That listening ear to gain ;
 That power is prayer, that soars on high,
 And feeds on bliss beyond the sky."

Another point that stands out in this narrative is—

VI.—THAT GREAT TEMPORAL CALAMITIES OFTEN LEAD TO THE
 HIGHEST SPIRITUAL GOOD.

The temporal affliction of this nobleman brought himself and whole family to Christ. It was simply trial that impelled him in the first place to go to Christ. Probably, all healing resources at his command he had tried with his dying son, and they had failed, and now he was driven from the natural to the supernatural. Nature could do no more for him; his only hope was that the Miraculous Worker of Whom he had heard might come to his relief. Trials often act thus. For this purpose they are sent. When prosperous men are reduced to pauperism, and strong men to physical infirmity, and men accustomed to society to a state of absolute loneliness, moral reflection is stimulated, spiritual inquiries are started, questions are asked about the spiritual and eternal. As the material vanishes from the man the spiritual becomes closer; as the temporal recedes the eternal presses on. Men in all ages can say, "It is good for me that I was afflicted; before I was afflicted, I went astray." There is meaning in what an old Athenian is reported to have said: "I should have been lost if I had not been lost." Want drove the prodigal back to his father's house. Affliction brought Manasseh back to the God of Israel. Affliction deals with men as the parent eagle with her young when she takes them from her nest where they have been sheltered and indulged, and bears them off on her wings, into mid-heaven, and shakes them off into immensity, there to struggle for themselves.

When men are stripped of all physical good their spirits often begin to struggle on their way towards the Great Fountain of Life. Well does Sir Walter Scott say: "There are those to whom a sense of religion has come in storm and tempest, and there are those whom it has summoned amid scenes of revelry and idle vanity; there are those who have heard its 'still small voice,' amid rural leisure and placid contentment. But perhaps the knowledge which cometh not to err is most frequently impressed upon the mind during seasons of affliction, and tears are the softening showers which cause the seed of heaven to spring and take root in the human heart."

No. XXVII.

THE POOL OF BETHESDA; OR, THE WORLD IN MINIATURE.

(*The Pool of Bethesda, the Healing of the Impotent Man, and our Lord's Discourse.*—v. 1—47.)

"After this (R. V. THESE THINGS) there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at (R. V. IN) Jerusalem by the sheep market (R. V. GATE) a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk (R. V. THEM THAT WERE SICK), of blind, halt, withered, waiting (R. V. OMITTS FROM THE WORD "WAITING" TO END OF VERSE FOUR) for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an (R. V. BEEN IN HIS) infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie (R. V. LYING), and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, He saith unto him, Wilt (R. V. WOULDST) thou be made whole? The impotent (R. V. SICK) man answered Him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately (R. V. STRAIGHTWAY) the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the Sabbath" (R. V. NOW IT WAS THE SABBATH ON THAT DAY).—v. 1—9.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 1.—*"After this there was a feast of the Jews."* Literally, "after these things," implying a succession of events. "Here closes," says Lange, "the first great ministry of Jesus in Galilee." The "feast" here is a subject on which expositors are not agreed. The probability, however, is that it was the Passover, the second of the four Passovers in our Lord's ministry. The point is of no practical moment. "And Jesus went up to Jerusalem." He went up from Capernaum, where He called Matthew. (Mark ii. 13, 14.) Jerusalem occupied an elevated position, not only in a moral, but in a local sense; it was 200 feet above the sea on the boundaries of Judæa.

Ver. 2 — *"Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches."* As John wrote A.D. 96, he wrote after Jerusalem had been destroyed; still there stood the "pool." This pool is generally regarded as that walled enclosure near St. Stephen's Gate, and is some 360 feet long, 130 feet broad, and 70 feet deep. It is called Bethesda, meaning a house of mercy. "Five porches"—

these, it would seem, were covered recesses around the pool for the shelter of the sick.

Ver. 3.—*"In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered."* "Impotent," the enfeebled and emaciated. "Blind"—blindness in the East is far more general than here. In Cairo it is said that one of every five is either blind or has diseased eyes. Some of the greatest men we have ever had have been blind—Homer, Ossian, Milton, the world's illustrious poets, were blind. John Metcalf, the great engineer, who lived in 1788, was blind. One of our greatest statesmen, Fawcett, was blind. "Halt"—the crippled and lame. "Withered"—paralyzed. "Waiting for the moving of the water." Though this clause and the next verse are not found in the great majority of the ancient manuscripts, and are rejected by many modern critics, there is strong internal evidence in favour of its genuineness. It seems almost necessary to give meaning to the seventh verse. The statement of Ebrard, that much is gained by excluding the verse from the text, he does not satisfactorily sustain. (See "Gospel History," p. 294.)

Ver. 4.—“*For an angel went down.*” It is not said that an angel was seen doing this. There is nothing absurd in this. It is spirit that governs matter, and gives to matter its virtues.

Ver. 5.—“*And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.*” This fact is stated, probably, to show the extremity of the case, and to exhibit the power and mercy of Christ.

Ver. 6.—“*When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, He saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?*” This man, perhaps, had never seen Christ before, and yet He knows all about him, and puts to him the question, “*Wilt thou be made whole?*”

Christ never acts contrary to the volition of men.

Ver. 7.—“*The impotent man answered Him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.*” He was utterly friendless as well as diseased and powerless, and those around him were all heartless and selfish. They cared not for him so long as they could push their way into the healing pool.

Ver. 8.—“*Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.*” He had no need to help him into the water, He could effect the cure by His mere volition, without any instrumentality whatever.

HOMILETICS.

The remarkable incident here recorded may be legitimately and profitably used as an illustration of the *great world of mankind*. Indeed, in it you have the world in miniature. Looking at it in this light we observe—

I.—THAT THE HUMAN WORLD IS GREATLY AFFLICTED.

At this pool we have a great multitude of “*impotent folk*” lying, “*blind, halt, withered,*” &c. What was seen at Bethesda may be seen everywhere throughout the vast population of the earth. Men are everywhere in suffering—witness battle-fields, slavery, hospitals, prisons, &c. &c. Suffering is the background of the great picture of human life. The world’s music is in the minor key. There is a wail in all its undertones; its history is tragic in the extreme. Two things should ever be remembered in relation to human suffering—

First: It is often the effect of sin. We say often, we could not say always. Human pains perhaps generally have their root in wrong. The connection between sin and suffering is a benevolent arrangement. To quench hell as long as sin reigns would be an injury to the creation.

Secondly: It is sometimes the means of holiness. It acts in some cases as the physician’s curative cup and the Father’s chastening rod.

Looking at the incident as a picture of mankind, we observe—

II.—THAT THE HUMAN WORLD HAS ITS ALLEVIATING ELEMENTS.

These suffering multitudes were at Bethesda—the house of mercy. Perhaps the waters in this pool had, like many waters,

medicinal virtues, or perhaps healing power was given to them by the descending angel. In either case we have the fact in connection with alleviating elements. The world is indeed a Bethesda. Healing waters flow at the feet of every sufferer. What are they?

First: The medicinal properties of the earth. Science has discovered in the mineral, the vegetable, and animal kingdoms, elements to mitigate and remove for a time the diseases and pains of suffering men.

Secondly: The soothing influences of nature. There is much in the bright sky, the green fields, the wooded hills, the yellow shore, and the blue wave, the beauty of the garden, the grandeur of the forest, the music of the river, and the chorus of the groves, to allay the anguish of our suffering nature.

Thirdly: The ministry of social love. Corrupt as the world is, the fountain of its affections is not dried up, its healing streams circulate through all circles; kind words, loving looks, and tender hands of sympathy are alleviating forces ever at work.

Fourthly: The blessed Gospel of Christ. This, indeed, is the great panacea, this is the sovereign balm for every wound. Such are some of the alleviating elements of life, some of the healing waters that ripple at our feet.

Looking at it in this light, we observe—

III.—THAT THE HUMAN WORLD IS PRE-EMINENTLY SELFISH.

At the side of this pool there was one man who had had an infirmity for thirty-eight years, and amongst the crowd who seem to have gone there year after year he had found no one to help him: "*While I am coming, another steppeth down.*" One might have thought that if they were too selfish to help him before they were cured themselves, that on their return from the healing waters they would have done so. But no, each cared for himself. Sad picture this of the human world! Every man for himself! Selfishness is not only a regard for our own interest, but a disregard for the interest of others. Selfishness is *injustice*. He who is taken up entirely with himself keeps back powers which should be employed in the service of others. Selfishness is *impiety*. The selfish man makes self his god: he is at once the centre and circumference of his own activity. Selfishness is *misery*. All the fiendish passions which are the furies of hell spring from it.

Looking at it in this light, we observe—

IV.—THAT THE HUMAN WORLD HAS A GLORIOUS DELIVERER.

There was One Who appeared now amongst the sufferers, Who said to the impotent man, "*Arise, take up thy bed, and walk.*" Three remarks are suggested concerning this Deliverer—

First: He cures the greatest of all human sufferers. This

was a man afflicted for no less than thirty-eight years—a whole generation had come and gone during the period of his affliction. “Christ is able to save to the uttermost.”

Secondly: He cures by virtue of His own word. “*Take up thy bed.*” These omnific words carried with them the curative virtue. Without the intervention of any means the man became hale and strong at once. He took up the little pallet on which his suffering body had been wont to lay, and walked forth in manly vigour.

Thirdly: He cures in concurrence with the will of the patient. “*Wilt thou be made whole?*” Christ does not outrage our freedom. He asks us if we will be saved. He says to each, Wilt thou have thy guilt, thy ignorance, thy misery removed? If thou consentest, the work is done; if not, thou art left to suffer and to die.

Blessed be God, this glorious Deliverer is still in our suffering world. To each He says, “*Wilt thou be made whole?*”

NO. XXVIII.

RELIGIOUS BIGOTRY AND DIVINE PHILANTHROPY.

“The Jews therefore (R. V. SO THE JEWS) said unto him that was cured, It is the Sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry (R. V. TAKE UP) thy bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. Then asked they him, What (R. V. WHO IS THE) man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? And (R. V. BUT) he that was healed wist not Who it was: for Jesus had conveyed Himself away, a multitude being in that place.”—v. 10—13.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 10.—“*The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the Sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.*” “In such cases the matter goes quickly through fanatics, informers, and subordinates to the chiefs. Here the hierarchical chiefs already seem to speak; according to Meyer and Tholuck, the Sanhedrists. Yet it is possible that the matter only gradually reached them. At first they attack only the man himself for his carrying, which was the most palpable.”—*Lange*. “*Not lawful.*” It was against the Jewish law to carry burdens on the Sabbath (Exod. xxxi. 13—17; Numbers xv. 32—36; Nehemiah xiii. 15—19; Jeremiah xvii. 21).

Ver. 11.—“*He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.*”

His answer implies that the Being Who had the power to heal him had the authority to command him. He felt that the Divinity that had cured him was superior to all ceremonial institutions.

Ver. 12.—“*Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?*” “*What man?*” Who is the man? The language seems to breathe a contemptuous spirit.

Ver. 13.—“*And he that was healed wist not Who it was: for Jesus had conveyed Himself away, a multitude being in that place.*” *Alford* renders the last clause, “Jesus escaped his notice, a multitude being in the place.” The idea is,—He slipped quietly out of the crowd that had gathered about Him.

HOMILETICS.

In these verses we have a specimen of two things—*religious bigotry and Divine philanthropy*. We have here—

I. RELIGIOUS BIGOTRY.

This is illustrated in the conduct of these Jews in relation to this cured man. Religious bigotry is—

First: Always punctilious. It lives in words and rituals, it sacrifices the "spirit" to the "letter." It is very true that there was a law prohibiting the carrying of burdens on the Sabbath, but the spirit of the Sabbatic institution was that of universal benevolence. Christ taught that *true Sabbath-keeping was well-doing*.* He who neglects a work of mercy on the Sabbath violates that holy day. The bigot is always quoting words, defending creeds, and observing rites. Religious bigotry is—

Secondly: Always heartless. Instead of rejoicing at seeing the poor man, who had been thirty-eight years a cripple, able to walk and to carry his pallet, they seemed to exult that they had caught a transgressor of their law. Bigotry eats up the humanity of men: nothing is more cruel. Not only has it tortured in all ages the best of men, but it transfixed the Son of Man Himself to a cross. "We have a law, and by our law He is to die." Religious bigotry is—

Thirdly: Always inquisitorial. "*What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?*" They did not ask, Who healed thee?—they had not sufficient humanity for that—but, Who bade thee take thy bed? We want to find the lawless profaner out in order to punish him according to our law. Bigotry always prys into the concerns of others; it built and sustained for ages the infernal Inquisition.

"The bigot theologian—in minute
Distinctions skilled, and doctrines un-reduced
To practice; in debate how loud! how long!
How dexterous! in Christian love how cold!
His vain conceits were orthodox alone.
The immutable and heavenly truth revealed
By God, was nought to him: he had an art,
A kind of hellish charm, that made the lips
Of truth speak falsehood: to his liking turned
The meaning of the text: made trifles seem
The marrow of salvation: to a word,
A name, a sect, that sounded in the ear
And to the eye so many letters showed,
But did no more—gave value infinite:
Proved still his reasoning best, and his belief
Though propped on fancies, wild as madmen's dreams
Most rational, most scriptural, most sound:
With mortal heresy denouncing all
Who in his arguments could see no force."—Robert Pollok.

* See an article on this subject in "Genius of the Gospel on Matthew."

We have here—

II.—DIVINE PHILANTHROPY.

Here in the work of Christ we have a glorious specimen of Divine philanthropy.

First: It is healing. It restored this "*impotent*" man, who had been lying at the pool of Bethesda for well-nigh forty years. Divine philanthropy does not expend itself in sighs of compassion and expressions of love: it works. It works amongst the suffering, and works with a power to restore the worst of cases. "Christ is able to save to the uttermost," &c.

Secondly: It is unrestricted. It is tied down by no letter or ceremony. All days and places are alike to it. Love is above all law; it is always lawful to do good. There is a thing called philanthropy on earth that is restricted by sects, bound by rules, and operates only through certain organizations: this is not the Divine thing. The Divine thing is as free as the air, and all-encompassing as the heavens.

Thirdly: It is commanding. "*He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.*" The man obeyed, though he knew not Who it was that bade him. The love that restored him became a sovereign within him. No power has such a commanding influence over us as the power of love. This man knew as he walked forth on the Sabbath-day with his bed on his back that he set at defiance the prejudice of the people around him; yet love bound him to it and made him invincible. "The love of Christ constraineth us."

Fourthly: It is unpretending. "*Jesus had conveyed Himself away, a multitude being in that place.*" Crowds were about Him at this time. The knowledge of the fact would in all probability have evoked their hosannas. All this was distasteful to Christ, hence He glided away; so silently withdrew that the man lost sight of Him at once. Divine philanthropy courts not applause, and seeks no reward but in the good it does.

CONCLUSION. Such is Divine philanthropy, the "new commandment" Christ brought into the world. Would that it inspired all who call themselves by His name, and profess to do His work!

No XXIX.

ADVANTAGES OF ATTENDING THE TRUE CHURCH.

"Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto (R. V. BEFALL) thee. The man departed (R. V. WENT AWAY), and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole."—v. 14, 15.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 14.—dicate that it was at some period
 "Afterward." The term would in- subsequent to the healing of the

impotent man recorded in the preceding verses. "*Jesus findeth him in the temple.*" Perhaps the physical recovery he had experienced led him to religious reflection and worship. The temple must have been a strange place to him, for he had been a paralytic for thirty-eight long years: there would be a sublimity in his impressions and a freshness in his devotions. The temple was a fit place for the expression of a grateful heart. Hezekiah hastened to the temple to praise God for his recovery. Jesus resorted to the temple, and thus He sanctioned the ordinance of public worship. "*And said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole.*" Christ recognized him, knew that his cure was complete, and declares it for his encouragement and gratitude. "*Sin no more*"—language implying that his affliction was the

fruit of some sin. Intemperance, impurity, inordinate passions, often afflict the body. "*Lest a worse thing come unto thee.*" Worse than thirty-eight years' suffering! Thus a moral relapse is a terrible thing. However great our sufferings may be, there is something worse if we sin.

Ver. 15. "*The man departed, and told the Jews.*" The idea that some attach to this, that he went to the temple to betray his Benefactor as a Sabbath-breaker, is far too improbable to be entertained. His proclamation was dictated, no doubt, by a heart overflowing with gratitude. At the time he knew not the Author of his restoration. "*He that was healed wist not Who it was.*" But now he is made aware of it, and declares his Restorer. He told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

HOMILETICS.

We take this incident to illustrate the *advantages of attending the true Church*. Whilst millions in this age neglect public worship altogether, those who attend to it are not sufficiently impressed with its obligation and advantages. Observe—

I.—IN THE TEMPLE THIS MAN MET WITH HIS MERCIFUL DELIVERER.

It was because he was in the temple Christ found him. Christ met His disciples in public worship. He has promised to do so. "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." "In all places where I record My name, I will come unto thee and bless thee." This old promise has received millions of realizations in every age, and is still being fulfilled in all the true Churches of Christendom every week.

"He likes the tents of Jacob well,
But still in Zion loves to dwell."

Now is it nothing to meet with the Great Deliverer; to meet with One Who can dispel all ignorance, correct all errors, chase away all sorrows, forgive all sins, overcome all enemies, and fill the soul with "joy unspeakable and full of glory"?

II.—IN THE TEMPLE THIS MAN RECEIVED DIVINE ADMONITIONS.

Christ speaks to him and says, "*Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.*" What did he learn here? (1.) That *sin was the cause of his affliction*. (2.) That he was *liable to fall into sin again*. (3.) That if *he fell into sin again, he would be worse off than ever*. These were solemn lessons—lessons of vital moment, lessons which

every man needs to learn and ponder well. Such admonitions as these are addressed to congregations in every true Church. Who but God can tell the advantage of having those things proclaimed, enforced, and reiterated, Sunday after Sunday in England?

III.—IN THE TEMPLE THIS MAN LEARNT HIS OBLIGATION TO CHRIST.

"The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole." He did not know this until he went to the temple and met with Christ. In the House of God men learn their obligations to Him Who loved them, and gave Himself for them.

"Spirit! whose life-sustaining presence fills
An ocean, central depths by man untried.
Thou for thy worshippers hast sanctified
All place, all time! The silence of the hills
Breathes veneration; founts and choral rills
Of thee are murmuring: to its inmost glade
The living forest with Thy whisper thrills,
And there is holiness on every shade.
Yet must the thoughtful soul of man invest
With dearer consecration, those pure fanes,
Which sever'd from all sounds of earth's unrest,
Hear naught but suppliant or adoring strains,
Rise heavenwards. Ne'er may rock or cave possess
Their claim on human hearts, to solemn tendencies."

Mrs. Hemans.

No. XXX.

CHRIST'S VINDICATION OF HIMSELF.

"And therefore (R. V. FOR THIS CAUSE) did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him, (R. V. OMITTS) because He had done (R. V. DID) these things on the Sabbath day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto (R. V. EVEN UNTIL NOW), and I work."—v. 16, 17.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 16.—*"And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus."* "For this cause the Jews persecuted Jesus." The expression is supposed to refer to a judicial arraignment. It would seem that there were minor Sanhedrims, exercising jurisdiction in Judæa, consisting sometimes of twenty, sometimes of seven, sometimes of three. Probably one of the smaller Sanhedrims were sitting in order to determine how best to put this Sabbath-breaker to death. *"And sought to slay Him."* These words are struck out by the best critics, although they are retained in the

18th verse. *"Because He had done these things on the Sabbath day."* *"What things?"* (1.) The healing of the invalid on the Sabbath. (2.) The commanding the healed man to carry his bed. It was directed in the law of Moses that a Sabbath-breaker should be put to death. (Exod. xxxi. 15; xxxv. 2.) But was a work of mercy on the Sabbath a violation of the fourth commandment? Besides, He was Lord of the Sabbath.

Ver. 17.—*"But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."* "My Father worketh until now, and I work also." "A difficult

answer," says *Lange*. "It undoubtedly asserts:—(1.) Christ's exaltation above the Sabbath law, like Mark ii. 28. (2.) The conformity of His work to the law of the Sabbath: in other words, His fulfilling of the Sabbath law—Matt. xii. 12. (3.) The relation

of the working of God to His own working, as its pattern—ver. 20. (4.) His working out from God and with God, which makes their charge a charge against God Himself—ver. 19. The last idea has special emphasis."

HOMILETICS.

Before studying the way in which the Great Son of God met this charge, it may be well for us to glance a moment at that *religious bigotry* which we just touched upon a few pages back. We have said that bigotry is heartless, punctilious, inquisitorial. It is further suggested by these words that it is *arrogant*. Here are a few ignorant men daring to sit in judgment upon One Who had manifested to their eyes the Divine attributes of mercy and power. Ignorance sitting in judgment upon wisdom, vice sitting in judgment upon virtue, human frailty upon superhuman power.

Christ met this charge by pleading the example of His Father: "*My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*" Observe (1.) *God works*. He is essentially active, and His activity explains not only the existence but all the operations of the universe. God's works are *original, wise, mighty, boundlessly varied, and ever beneficent*. (2.) *God works on Sabbath days as well as on other days*. Were He to pause in His activity the heavenly orbs would stop in their courses, the air become stagnant, the ocean still, and all nature motionless as death itself. He never slumbers or sleeps. "He fainteth not, neither is weary." Christ's words imply two things in relation to God's *unremitting operation*.

I.—THAT IT IS RIGHT.

Christ pleads it as a justification for what He had just accomplished on the Sabbath. It is said that God "rested on the seventh day." But inactivity is not rest, non-working is not Sabbath-keeping. God works on the Sabbath, and therefore working on the Sabbath is right. The Infinite cannot do wrong. What He does is right because He does it; there is no law of right outside of Himself. His actions are the expressions, the revelations, and the laws of absolute right. Well-doing is Sabbath-keeping. Another thing which is implied in Christ's words concerning God's *unremitting operation* is—

II.—THAT IT IS EXEMPLARY.

"*My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*" What He does I am bound to do; He is my Model. We are all commanded to be imitators of God, to be partakers of the Divine nature, to be "holy, even as He is holy." How can the finite imitate the Infinite? Not

in natural attributes, but in spirit and aim; and though we cannot do what He does, we can have the spirit that inspires Him in all His procedure, viz. *love*. He is beneficent in all His operations, and so should we be. He pours tides of happiness on His universe on Sabbath-days as well as other days, and on that day our grand object should be to bless our fellow-men. Again, we repeat, *Sabbath-keeping is well-doing*.

No XXXI.

CHRIST'S VINDICATION OF HIMSELF AGAINST THE CHARGE OF BLASPHEMY. (1.) THE NATURE OF HIS AUTHORITY.

"Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God," &c.—v. 18—31.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 18.—*"Therefore (R. V. FOR THIS CAUSE) the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken (R. V. BRAKE) the Sabbath, but said also that God was His Father (R. V. CALLED GOD HIS OWN FATHER), making Himself equal with God."* *πατέρα ἑαυτοῦ*. It means that God was His own Father. The Jews considered that this claim meant His making Himself equal with God, and that therefore He was a blasphemer. Christ does not deny their interpretation, but proceeds to vindicate His claim to the high distinction. In this they discovered another reason for putting Him to death: for the law authorized the infliction of capital punishment not only for Sabbath-breaking, but for blasphemy as well.

Ver. 19.—*"Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of Himself."* Christ here denies all action independent of His Father. He neither originates or pursues a course of conduct either in rivalry or apart from the Father. Their spirit and aim are identical. *"But what He seeth the Father do (R. V. DOING): for what things,"* &c. The meaning is, the Son doeth the same in the same way, or after the same fashion. Can there be a stronger assertion of His equality with the Father than this? I see not how, after language of this kind, I can reject the Divinity of Christ, and not denounce His untruthfulness and pro-

fanity. If I hold His moral excellence I must hold His Divinity.

Ver. 20.—*"For the Father loveth the Son."* *φιλεῖ* is a word which denotes rather affection for the person than for the character. *"And sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth."* Love is ever communicative and confiding; it has an instinct to reveal its deepest thoughts and aims to its object. *"And He will shew Him greater works than these."* "And greater works than these shall He shew Him."—*Alford*. What are the "greater works"? Those undoubtedly referred to in the subsequent verses (21, 22): those which *Stier* calls "*God's Regalia*."

Ver. 21.—*"For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them."* "One act in two stages, the resurrection of the body, and the restoration of life to it. This surely is the Father's absolute prerogative, if He have any." *"Even so the Son quickeneth whom He will."* "Not only doing the same Divine act, but doing it as the result of His own will, even as the Father does it. This statement is of immense importance in relation to the miracles of Christ, distinguishing them from similar miracles of prophets and apostles, who as human instruments were employed to perform supernatural actions, while Christ did all—as the Father's commissioned servant indeed, but—in the exercise of His own absolute right of action."—*Brown*.

Ver. 22.—*"For the Father judgeth*

no man (R. V. NEITHER DOTH THE FATHER JUDGE ANY), *but hath committed* (R. V. GIVEN) *all judgment unto the Son.*" Christ says here, Neither doth the Father judge any man, but hath committed all judgment, administration unto His Son.

Ver. 23.—"*That all men should* (R. V. MAY) *honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.*" "Theology of the Divine administration. The Father manifests Himself in the acts of the Son, because He manifests Himself in the being of the Son. And the acts of the Son unfold themselves in the total works of salvation and judgment, to the end that the Son may be honoured and glorified as the Father, in order that the Father may be glorified in Him." "*He that honoureth not the Son,*" &c. "Spoken most especially against the Sanhedrists."—*Lange.*

Ver. 24.—"*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting* (R. V. ETERNAL) *life,*" &c. "*Verily, verily.*" St. Augustine says these words were at that time an oath. The idea of the verse is, that he who accepts My doctrines, and trusts Him Who sent Me, shall realize his well-being for ever. "*And shall not come into condemnation* (R. V. COMETH NOT INTO JUDGMENT); *but is* (R. V. HATH) *passed from* (R. V. OUT OF) *death unto life.*" Faith in Him as the Messenger of the Almighty Father effects this glorious transition.

Ver. 25.—"*Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming* (R. V. COMETH), *and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.*" The death here evidently refers not to the corporeally dead, as in the 29th verse, but to the spiritually dead. For it is said, "*The hour is coming, and now is.*" The soul-quickening era of the Gospel has come when all who will believe on Me, the Son of God, "*shall live.*" "The present manifestation of Christ's vivifying power in the spiritual resurrection is stated in contrast with the future manifestation in the general resurrection. The hour was coming so far as the Christian dispensation truly began with the gift of Pentecost: but it was

already while Christ openly taught among men."—*Westcott.*

Ver. 26.—"*For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given* (R. V. EVEN SO GAVE HE) *to the Son to have life in Himself.*" What do these words import but this—That the Eternal Father, the Absolute Fountain of life, has endowed Christ with a life with which to quicken humanity? "As Thou hast given Him power, that He may give eternal life to as many as believe on Him." The "*logos*" is life. He is the life, John xi. 25. The eternal life, 1 John v. 20. The life which is the essence of God. He is the Communicator of life, John i. 54.

Ver. 27.—"*And hath given Him* (R. V. HE GAVE HIM) *authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man.*" "This seems to confirm the last remark that what Christ had probably in view was the indwelling of the Son's essential life in humanity as the great theatre and medium of Divine display in both the great departments of His work—life-giving and judgment. The appointment of a judge in our own nature is one of the most august and beautiful arrangements of Divine wisdom in redemption."—*Dr. Brown.*

Vers. 28, 29.—"*Marvel not at this:*"—that is, at the appointment of the Son as the great Judge of humanity—"for the hour is coming (R. V. COMETH), in the which all that are in the graves (R. V. THE TOMBS) shall hear His voice, and shall come forth," &c. This points to a period often referred to in the sacred volume, Dan. xii. 2; John xi. 43, 44; 1 Cor. xv. 20—58; Rev. xxii. 15. We subjoin the following remarks from Van Doren:—"The same person, but not the identical body, will be raised (*Locke*). Cannot literally be the same body. (1.) Science shows that in seven years the human body has so totally changed that not one atom remains: so that a man seventy years of age has had ten bodies. (2.) Shows that immediately after death the various particles begin to liberate themselves, and mix up as parts of other bodies. (3.) In Oriental lands the dead are burned, not buried, and in process of combustion the greater

portions of the body pass off in gases, to mingle with other forms of existence. (4.) In the case of cannibals the parts of the body eaten assimilate with and become integral portions of other human bodies. St. Paul says, 'Thou sowest not that body that shall be.' What the Bible calls the resurrection body takes place at death (*Bush, Maurice*). In the buried body exists an indestructible germ (*Origen, Watts, Drew*). An immortal bone (*Ancient Jews and others*). A monad (*Leibnitz, Goethe*). In the spirit lies an ideal form of the body" (*Lange*).

Vers. 30, 31.—"I can of Mine own

self (R. V. MYSELF) do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just" (R. V. RIGHTEOUS), &c. "I can of—or from (ἀφ)—Mine own self do nothing"—apart from, or in rivalry of, the Father, and in any separate interest of My own. "As I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just," &c. "My judgments are all anticipated in the bosom of My Father, to which I have immediate access, and by Me they are only responded to and reflected. They cannot therefore err since I live for one end only, to carry into effect the will of Him that sent Me."—*Dr. Brown*.

HOMILETICS.

The passage we have under consideration constitutes a part of our *Saviour's defence against the charge of blasphemy*. The whole defence has something like a logical arrangement. In the first part, extending over the whole of the verses before us, He states the *nature* of His authority; in the second part, running on to the end of the chapter, He points to the *proof* of His authority. Under the first head He claims five things: A special *unity* with the Father, the special *affection* of the Father, the special *revelations* of the Father, the special *prerogatives* of the Father, and special *devotion* to the Father.

Christ in this paragraph is vindicating Himself against the charge of blasphemy, and in His vindication He points both to the *nature* and *proof* of His authority. All the homiletical remarks that we have to make on the verses now before us may be treated under the general head of—

THE NATURE OF HIS AUTHORITY.

And in connection with this subject He claims several things—

First: A special unity with the Father. "*Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do.*" The solemn asseveration ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν occurs no less than three times in this very discourse, and must be regarded as expressing absolute certainty. The subject of the asseveration is unity with the Absolute Father, a unity which is something more than a unity of sympathy, will, action; it is a unity of *being*. If the Son does nothing but what the Father does, nothing in the universe of matter or mind, and the Son does all that the Father does, since the activity of God is infinite, and since there cannot be two infinities, the natures must be one. Hence we find throughout the New Testament the same absolute attributes, the same governing and redeeming works ascribed alike to the Father and the Son. The charge of blasphemy

which the Jews brought against Christ for claiming equality, He, instead of disclaiming, declares, with solemn emphasis. As Christ claims equality with God, if He is not God He is untruthful, dishonest, blasphemous, and must be discarded as the true moral leader of the race. I cannot reject the Divinity of His nature and hold the holiness of His character. He claims—

Secondly: The special affection of the Father. "*The Father loveth the Son.*" Observe (1.) The Father loves. He is not a Being of cold intellectuality, He is a Being of infinite affection. Whilst He is wise in counsel, He is tender in love. The Creator of the universe is a loving Being, and His love is the fountal Source of all life and activities. "God is love." Whilst some scientists represent the Almighty as an infinite stoic, hard as iron, unbending as fate, and certain religionists as capricious and malevolent, the Gospel reveals Him as LOVE.

"O love, the one Sun! O love, the one Sea!
What life has begun that breathes not in Thee?
Thy rays have no limit, Thy waves have no shore,
Thou giv'st without measure to worlds evermore."

(2.) The chief object of the Father's love is the Son. His heart is centred on Him. "*This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.*" "*The Father loveth the Son.*" But does He not love all? Yea, but the Son especially. The Son is greater, better, nearer to Himself than all else in the universe. If the Infinite Father's heart is on the Son, let our hearts centre on the same Object, and then we in heart shall be one with the Great God. He claims—

Thirdly: Special revelations from the Father. "*He sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth.*" Communicativeness is the instinct of love. The deepest things of the heart we reveal to the chief object of our affection. The Infinite Father keeps no secret from Christ. (1.) All the great things that the Father has already done the Son knows. He has a complete insight into all the operations of the Infinite throughout immensity. Christ knows the universe thoroughly. Let us learn of Him. (2.) The greater things that the Father has yet to do, the Son will also know. "*Greater works than these.*" "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure in them." What He has already done is great, incomprehensibly great, but what He has to do in the future is greater still. "*Greater works.*" What the Eternal has done in the ages that are past may be only a faint indication of what He will do throughout the æons that are to dawn. Christ knows all. But perhaps the "*greater works*" mentioned here are the greater works in human history referred to in the following verses. And at these works men will "*marvel.*" He claims—

Fourthly: Special prerogatives of the Father. Christ here seems to claim several prerogatives of the Father.

(1.) Power to awaken the dead according to His own will. "*As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will.*" Who but God can quicken life? An insect may destroy the majestic cedar of Lebanon, but God alone can restore the drooping flower.

This power Christ claims. The Son does the same as the Father—does it without restraint, control, or direction. "*Whom He will.*" Does it, "according to His own good pleasure." The worse death is the death of souls, and the most important work is the quickening of dead souls. This Christ does. And this is a Divine prerogative (Rom. iv. 17).

(2.) Authority to judge humanity and to receive its worship. "*The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father,*" &c. When it is denied that the Father judgeth men it is done in the same way in which, in verse 19, chap. vii. 17, it is denied that the Son can do anything of Himself—that is, in isolation from the Father. Christ is the Judge, Matt. xxv.; Acts xvii. 31. But whilst He has authority to judge the world, He has also authority to receive its worship. "*That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.*" Worship is here claimed by Christ. "Let all the angels of God worship Him." He is worshipped in heaven. "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power," &c. "Every knee shall bow to Him of things in heaven and things on earth," &c. &c.

(3.) Capacity for redeeming humanity from condemnation and death. "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*"

Observe (a) That human souls are in a state of moral guiltiness and death. Their guilt is a matter of universal consciousness, and their death is proved by their insensibility to the beauty of holiness and the claims of God. (b) That Christ's word has the power to effect the restoration of human souls. "*He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me,*" &c. And again, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." Faith in Him is the soul-restoring power. All that the greatest of human or angelic teachers can do is to communicate information. Christ alone clears away guilt, and breathes new life—a life that is everlasting.

(4.) The possession of absolute life and judicial administration. "*As the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man.*" Life in Himself, unoriginative, independent, eternal. "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light," &c. &c. Such life is the life of God, and

God only. Then judicial administration, too, is His: "*to execute judgment.*"* Not merely to judge, but to administer justice. Is not this a Divine prerogative? In His judicial capacity He will raise the dead and determine the destinies of mankind. "*Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth.*" In verse 25 a spiritual resurrection was referred to.

There are at least three theories of the resurrection. One is the coming forth of the body, the very body that was committed to the grave. This idea is at once against science and against Scripture: the sameness between the buried and the resurrection body is not the sameness in particle and proportion, but the sameness in figure and function. Another idea is, the resurrection body is something that comes out of some indestructible "germ," or "bone," or "monad," which lay hid in the buried frame. And the other idea is that the resurrection body is the ideal form of the body which lies in the spirit, and goes out of it at death. Bush, Maurice, and others, regard the present body as the grave of the spirit, and that when the spirit departs in death it goes off to the spiritual world in a spiritual body. Without canvassing these theories, or pronouncing on their merits, the verse brings under notice four subjects: (a) The Resurrection *period*. "*The hour is coming.*" It is not something past: it awaits us. (b) The Resurrection *power*. "*His voice.*" This is the quickening force. (c) The Resurrection *subjects*. "*All that are in the graves.*" Not a class, not a generation, but "*all.*" (d) The Resurrection *issues*. "*They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*" Character, not creed, determines destiny. Well-doing—heaven: ill-doing—hell.

No. XXXII.

CHRIST'S VINDICATION OF HIMSELF AGAINST THE CHARGE OF BLASPHEMY. (2.) THE PROOF OF HIS AUTHORITY.

"If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of Me; and I know that the witness which He witnesseth of Me is true," &c.—v. 31—47.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—It must be kept in mind that Christ, from the 19th verse of this chapter, is vindicating Himself against the charge of blasphemy. His defence is logically arranged. It consists, first, of the *nature* of His authority, ver. 19—29; and, secondly, a statement of the *proof* of His authority. This statement

extends from verse 30 to the end of the chapter, and this is the paragraph we have now to notice.

Ver. 32.—"*There (v. 17) is another that beareth witness of Me; and I know that the witness which He witnesseth of Me is true.*" Who is this? None other than the Father Himself, as appears in the sequel. He was well

* See Homily on these words at end of volume.

assured that the witness of His Father was true.

Ver. 33.—“*Ye sent* (R. V. HAVE SENT) *unto John, and he bare* (R. V. HE HATH BORNE) *witness unto the truth.*” In all probability Christ here refers to the deputation which the rulers sent to the Baptist, chap. iii. 26, and from whom they received a testimony concerning Christ.

Ver. 34.—“*But I receive not testimony from man*” (R. V. THE WITNESS WHICH I RECEIVE IS NOT FROM MAN). This does not mean that Christ rejected or undervalued the testimony of John, but that He did not need it, He was independent of it. “*But* (R. V. HOWBEIT) *these things I say, that ye might be saved.*” He referred to John’s testimony, not for His own sake, but for theirs. They believed in John, and his testimony would tend to their salvation.

Ver. 35.—“*He was a burning and a shining light*” (R. V. THE LAMP THAT BURNETH AND SHINETH). “He was a lamp burning and shining. Christ is never called by the humble word here applied to John—a light-bearer, studiously used to distinguish him from his Master, but ever The Light (τὸ φῶς) in the most absolute sense.”—Brown. The Baptist was a lamp kindled by another antithetical to φως. “*And ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.*” There is a play of irony here referring to the hollow delight with which his testimony excited them.

Ver. 36.—“*But I have greater witness* (R. V. THE WITNESS THAT I HAVE IS GREATER) *than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given Me to finish,*” &c. He means the testimony of His miracles was the testimony of His Father Himself Who had sent Him.

Ver. 37.—“*And the Father Himself, which hath sent Me, hath borne witness of Me.*” Whether the reference is here to the testimony of His Father independent of His works or not, it is certain that Christ had a more direct testimony than that from the Father, as on the occasion of His baptism, when there came a voice from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well

pleased.” “*Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape*” (R. V. FORM). So deaf are your spiritual ears, and so sealed your eyes, that you neither hear nor see the Eternal Father.

Ver. 38.—“*And ye have not His word abiding in you.*” “You lack permanent inward appreciation of His words,” the true Messianic idea is not in you. “*For whom He hath sent, Him ye believe not.*” This is an effect and evidence of your not having the true idea within.

Vers. 39, 40.—“*Search the Scriptures* (R. V. YE SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES); *for in them ye think* (R. V. BECAUSE YE THINK THAT IN THEM) *ye have eternal life.*” You search the Scriptures expecting to find “eternal life” in them, that is in the mere letter of truth, but there is no life in the letter. “*They are they which testify* (R. V. BEAR WITNESS) *of Me. And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life.*” Dr. Brown expresses the idea in the following words:—“With disregarding the Scriptures I charge you not: ye do indeed busy yourselves about them (He was addressing, it will be remembered, the rulers, ver. 16); rightly deeming them your charter of eternal life. But ye miss the great burden of them; of Me it is they testify: and yet to Me ye will not come for that eternal life which ye profess to find there, and of which they proclaim Me the ordained Dispenser.”

Ver. 41.—“*I receive not honour* (R. V. GLORY) *from men.*” “Honour,” that is, applause, glory. This was a fact. They did not honour Him, among other reasons because He had not that royal pomp and pageantry with which they associated their Messiah.

Ver. 42.—“*But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.*” He read their hearts, and discovered at once the cause of their spiritual blindness and depravity. They lacked love, love for God.

Ver. 43.—“*I am come in My Father’s name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.*” How strikingly has this

been verified in the history of the Jews. "From the time of the true Christ to our time," says *Bengel*, "sixty-four false Christs have been reckoned, by whom the Jews have been deceived."

Ver. 44.—"*How can ye believe, which receive honour (R. V. GLORY) one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?*" (R. V. THE ONLY GOD YE SEEK NOT.) The idea is, So long as you set a high value upon the opinions of your fellow-men, you cannot honour Me with that virtuous honour that comes from God.

Ver. 45.—"*Do not think (R. V. THINK NOT) that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust.*" "Referring, no doubt, to the accusations which they brought against Him, and the human trial which they put upon Him. Before the court He has assumed more and more the mien of a majestic judge. He has finally represented them as contradicting the testimony of God, as antichrists, pagans. They are disarmed by the authority and power of His words, and discharge Him. Now so far as He is concerned, He proposes to discharge them. He will not accuse them to the Father: but another, says He, will accuse you, even Moses, in whom ye hope. This is the last, the mightiest stroke. That very Moses on whom they set their

hope will accuse them, and put their hope to shame. Not exactly the Holy Scriptures, but Moses himself, in his spirit as the representative of the legal basis of the Holy Scriptures. If they rightly searched the Scriptures they would find Christ, and only Christ, in the Old Testament, even in the books of Moses alone. But they find Moses in them, and only Moses, only law even in the prophets; and on this omnipresent Moses, whose all the Scriptures are in their view, that is on the legal element of the Holy Scriptures, they placed their self-righteous confidence."—*Lange*.

Ver. 46.—"*For had (R. V. IF I) ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me.*" If you believe Moses, you would believe Me. An important testimony, as *Alford* says, to the subject of the whole Pentateuch.

Ver. 47.—"*But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?*" "A remarkable contrast, not absolutely putting Old Testament Scripture below His own words, but pointing to the office of those venerable documents to prepare Christ's way to the necessity universally felt for documentary testimony in revealed religion, and perhaps, as *Stier* adds, to the relation which the comparative 'letter' of the Old Testament holds to the more flowing words of 'spirit and life' which characterize the New Testament."

HOMILETICS.

The subject is, as we have stated, *Christ's vindication of Himself against the charge of blasphemy*. This subject extends from the 19th verse to the end of the chapter. In His vindication He makes a very full statement of His Divine authority. First: He discloses its *nature*; and Secondly: He states its *proofs*. Our attention has been occupied with the former in our preceding discourse on verses 19 to 29. We have now to consider the latter, viz.—

THE PROOFS OF HIS AUTHORITY.

The proofs may be grouped under two general heads.

First: His absolute devotion to the Eternal Will. "*I can of Mine own self do nothing:*" as I hear—that is, as I hear the actual, the sentence of God—"I judge, and My judgment is just."* I can do

* See Homily on these words at end of volume.

nothing; I feel Myself to be the mere organ of the Infinite Father. Love for Him is the inspiration of My being, His will is the absolute law that governs all My activities.

But how is this absolute consecration of Christ to the Divine Will, which He here asserts, an authentication of His Divine authority? Because such a life is the highest proof of the power and presence of Divinity. The diviner the life a man lives, the more manifest is God in his history.

Secondly: His authentication from the Eternal Himself. "*There is another that beareth witness of Me.*" Here the reference is undoubtedly to God the Father. He bore ample and mighty testimony to the Divine authority of Christ. And in these verses Christ refers to the means by which that testimony was expressed.

How? (1.) By John the Baptist. "*Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.*" Three things are here referred to concerning John. (a) His testimony. Where is that to be found? "John bare witness of Him, and cried, saying, This is He of whom I spake; He that cometh after me is preferred before me, for He was before me." "And this is the record of John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? He it is Who, coming after me, is preferred before me, Whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose." "And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him." (b) His influence. "*I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved.*" The idea is, I do not require the testimony of John or of any man, but I quote John because you believe in him. He has influence with you, and his testimony may induce you to believe in Me, in order that you may be saved. You must believe in My Divine authority to be saved. John has borne testimony to that. You believe in John, and therefore I point you to him as a witness. (c) His character. "*He was a burning and a shining light.*" He was a "*light*" that attracted to the Jordan all Judæa and the regions round about. He was a "*light*" that all regarded as Divine. "All hold John as a prophet." He was a "*light*" which even Herod the king revered. "He feared John, knowing that he was a just man and holy." He was a brilliant light, "for amongst those that are born of woman, there has not appeared a greater than John the Baptist." Surely such a man's testimony was to be taken. Again, His Father authenticated His authority,—

(2.) By miracles. "*But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me.*" The miracles of Christ were confessedly great and numerous. "If all His mighty works had been written in a book," &c. &c. Three facts are to be noticed here. (a) That those miracles were wrought

of God. They were Divine, not human productions. How can this be proved? 1. Man *instinctively* ascribes all miracles to God. Anything approaching the miraculous in nature, men everywhere—the savage and the civilized—involuntarily conclude to be products of Divine interposition. Though their logic would not perhaps take them to this point, their intuition always does. 2. Men must *logically* conclude that miracles of such a moral description, and wrought by such a high moral character as that of Jesus of Nazareth, are Divine. Had His miracles breathed malevolence, and tended to immorality and unhappiness, the logic of human nature would have denied their Divinity. Reason would have protested against the conclusions of instinct. But in the case of Jesus the moral character of the Miracle-worker was so sublimely pure and loving, and His mighty works so benign and virtuous, that you are bound to ascribe them to the primal Source of all power and goodness. Well might Christ say that “*the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me.*” Another fact to be noticed here is—(b) That the God, who wrought the miracles, they practically ignored. “*Ye have neither heard His voice nor seen His shape.*” These theoretic theists were practically atheists: they were without God in the world. The other fact to be noticed here is—(c) That they practically ignored this God because His word was not in their hearts. “*Ye have not His word abiding in you.*” If the word—the truth of God—had been in them as an all-animating power, they would have heard and seen God everywhere. If there is no God within, there is no God without. Men in whose hearts the Divine word is not, have no ears to hear the Infinite, though He speak in thunder, no eyes to see Him, though He fills up their horizon. Again His Father authenticated His authority—

(3) By Scripture. “*Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me.*”* The Scriptures did testify of Christ; Moses and the prophets were full of Him. These Jews did “*search the Scriptures,*” they made a habit, a conscience of this. “*Ye search the Scriptures,*” says Christ. They searched the Scriptures, thinking that thereby they should have “*eternal life,*” but they had no life; they had not found Christ, Who is THE LIFE. Two things are suggested here. (a) There are men who search the Scriptures who never go to Christ. The Jews did so; and hundreds are to be found in this age who live in the study of the Scriptures, who have never gone to Christ. They find sometimes a theological Christ, or an ecclesiastical Christ, but not *the* Christ of God, the living, loving, personal Saviour of the world. Ye search the Scriptures “*and ye will not come to Me.*” The Scriptures, which are designed to bring men to Christ, often keep them away. (b) The reason men do not go to Christ is

* See Germ, p. 140.

because they are more in sympathy with the human than with the Divine. "*I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.*" You have no sympathy with His character, His works and aims; on the contrary, your sympathies are all with the thoughts and doings of man. Worldly honours and worldly pleasures so occupy your minds that you cannot see the Divine. "*How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?*" How solemnly true this is! Conventional ideas of honour and happiness blind the eyes of men to the honour and blessedness that come "*from God only.*" The world's heroes are evermore the incarnations of the world's thoughts, and those thoughts are, alas! far away from the immutable realities. He whose character and status are most in keeping with the popular sentiment will ever be the greatest magnate for the time. His Father authenticated His authority—

(4.) By Moses. "*Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust,*" &c. (a) They professed the utmost confidence in Moses. Moses was their lawgiver, their prophet, their moral master; they said, We are Moses' disciples, and "*we know that God spake unto Moses.*" (b) Moses testified to the Divine authority of Christ. "*Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me.*" He spoke of Me as the "*seed of the woman,*" as the "*Shiloh,*" as a "*star out of Jacob,*" as a prophet that should be "*raised from amongst His brethren.*" You believe in Moses, and Moses testified of Me. What then? If you reject Me: (1.) Moses himself will condemn you. "*Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses.*" I need pronounce no judgment upon your conduct, I leave you with Moses. The man in whom you trust, he shall condemn you. (2.) My words will not be credited by you. "*If you believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?*" After all your professions you believe not Moses, or else you would believe Me.

CONCLUSION. "This discourse of our Saviour presents some of the highest subjects for human thought, and some of the most impressive reasons why we, as well as the Jews, should believe in Him as the Messiah, the Son of God. The testimony of John the Baptist, the sublime miracles which Christ performed, the witness which God repeatedly gave Him, and the prophetic declarations of the Mosaic dispensation, still speak to us through the living page of the book of inspiration; and can any man innocently reject such various and overwhelming evidence? Or, if any one is too hardened to be convinced by these arguments, though strong and conclusive, oh, let him not resist the pleadings of compassion and the merciful intercessions which broke forth from the quivering lips of the Divine Sufferer on the Cross. Let love persuade where reason cannot convince."

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

RUINOUS SEARCHING OF THE SCRIPTURES.

No. XXII.

"Search (R. V. YE SEARCH) the Scriptures ; for (R. V. BECAUSE) in them ye think ye have Eternal Life : and they (R. V. THESE) are they which testify (R. V. BEAR WITNESS) of Me. And ye will not come to Me."—v. 39, 40.

Christ, I take it, is not here commanding the Jews to "*Search the Scriptures*," but stating the fact that they did so. The mood is to be taken as in the indicative, not in the imperative. This is according to the Revised Version, which reads, "Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life, and these are they which bear witness of Me."

I.—HERE ARE MEN SEARCHING FOR THE HIGHEST OBJECT.

The object they were in quest of was "*eternal life*," which of course they considered to be something more than endless existence. Whatever it was, it was their *summum bonum*, their chief good. Christ's language implies that the good they sought would only be found in Him, and He was in the Scriptures : they testified or bore witness of Him.

II.—HERE ARE MEN SEARCHING FOR THE HIGHEST OBJECT
IN THE RIGHT PLACE.

"*Ye search the Scriptures.*" Observe—

- (1.) *The highest search of man is for the chief good.*
- (2.) *The chief good is only found in Christ.*
- (3.) *Christ is to be found in the Scriptures.* The Scriptures are not Christ, any more than the casket is the jewel, the field the pearl of great price, the palace the sovereign. Where is Christ to be found ? In the Gospel.

III.—HERE ARE MEN SEARCHING FOR THE HIGHEST OBJECT
IN THE RIGHT PLACE, AND UTTERLY FAILING.

These men did not find Christ. Instead of the Messiah, they found one whom they regarded as an impostor and a blasphemer, unfit to live. Ah, me ! Thousands in every age "*search the Scriptures*," but they do not find the true Christ there. They find their little creeds, their tawdry rites, and arguments to buttress their sects and their systems. They do not find the living, loving, personal Son of God, the Saviour of the World. Why is this ? Because their searching is—

- (1.) *Technical, and not spiritual ;*
- (2.) *Speculative, and not practical ;*
- (3.) *Desultory, and not persistent ;*
- (4.) *Perfunctory, and not earnest ;*
- (5.) *Irreverent, and not devout.* Men often find in the Bible what they do not seek,—they find a demon instead of a Christ, a curse

instead of a blessing; damnation instead of salvation. The Scriptures have proved the ruin of thousands.

No. XXIII.

THE SETTLED CONDITION OF A SINNER'S WELL-BEING.

"Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life."—v. 40.

Man's well-being here, and in various other places in the New Testament, is represented as "*life*." And what is the life? Supreme love to God. This man had at first; he lost it; and in its loss is spiritual death. The man who has this is truly alive, and he only. Observe two things in relation to it—

I.—THE SETTLED CONDITION PROPOUNDED.

How is it to be obtained? Only by coming to Christ. Christ alone can generate this supreme love to the Eternal Father in the human heart. He does it—

First: By furnishing the strongest demonstrations of *God's love to the sinner*.

Secondly: By furnishing the highest manifestation of *the lovable-ness of God's character*. They must come to Him; come to His teaching, as loyal pupils come to the teaching of their master; come to His life, as hero-worshippers come to the life of a great hero.

II.—THE SETTLED CONDITION NEGLECTED.

"*Ye will not come.*" Why won't they come? Is it because the condition is too difficult? No; it is simple enough. They will go to their Shakspeare, their Cromwell, and their Luther. Are not Christ's thoughts more simple and more sublime than any of these? Is not His history more romantic and more heroic? Is it because they have discovered any other way to true well-being? No; no other way exists. All philosophy and experience show this. Why then?

First: They are too engrossed in other subjects.

Secondly: They are too prone to presume upon the advent of a better opportunity.

Thirdly: They are too much under the influence of the god of this world.

No. XXXIII.

THE BENEFICENCE OF CHRIST.

(*The twelve return. Jesus retires with them across the lake. Five thousand are fed.*—Matt. xiv. 13—21; Mark vi. 30—44; Luke ix. 10—17; John vi. 1—14.)

After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias," &c.—vi. 1—14.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—There are four independent accounts of this miracle. They beautifully agree in substance, though they differ in style,

according to the peculiarities of each writer. Matthew shows that our Lord's retirement to the wilderness was immediately after the death of John the Baptist. Mark and Luke also speak of this. John adds the circumstance that the passover was at hand, which accounts for the great multitudes which were streaming to Jesus on their way to Jerusalem. For the other accounts see Matt. xiv. 13—21; Mark vi. 30—44; Luke ix. 10—17.

Ver. 1.—“*After these things.*” This does not mean, after the charge of blasphemy against Christ and His defence, as recorded in the preceding chapter; but after the death of John the Baptist, &c., as recorded by Matthew. Upwards of a year had elapsed between this miracle and the things recorded in the preceding chapter. The third passover was at hand, and another year would bring the life of Jesus to a close. “*Jesus went over (R. V. AWAY TO THE OTHER SIDE OF) the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias;*” called after the name of an ancient city on the west side. The present name is Tabariyeh. It is so called by John for the benefit of those who are unacquainted with the geography of Palestine. Its shape is oval, thirteen miles long, and six broad. In the neighbourhood of the sea our Lord spent the greater portion of His public life. Nine cities stood on its shores, amongst which was Capernaum, “His own city.” It was the most densely populated place in all Palestine.

Ver. 2.—“*And a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His miracles (R. V. BEHELD THE SIGNS) which He did on them that were diseased.*” (R. V. SICK). The mere wonders in themselves would not necessarily attract many. Otherwise had they been malignant and destructive, they would have repelled; but being beneficent they attracted, they drew men after Him.

Ver. 3.—“*And Jesus went up into a (R. V. THE) mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.*” The whole sea is skirted by a chain of hills on both sides, and the particular moun-

tain cannot be ascertained. He ascended the mountain, probably to avoid the crowd and to enjoy the elevated delights of quiet and holy devotion.

Ver. 4.—“*And (R. V. NOW) the Passover, a (R. V. THE) feast of the Jews, was nigh*” (R. V. AT HAND). This is probably the third passover of our Lord's ministry. A great Jewish festival, causing at this time perhaps the gathering of the great multitudes. John alone states this.

Ver. 5.—“*When Jesus then lifted (R. V. LIFTING) up His eyes, and saw (R. V. SEEING) a great company come unto Him (R. V. MULTITUDE COMETH UNTO HIM), He saith unto Philip, Whence shall (R. V. ARE WE TO) we buy bread, that these may eat?*” Being now in the region of Bethsaida Julius, of which Philip was a native, the question was naturally addressed to him concerning provisions for the famishing multitudes. “*Whence?*” The object was to call attention to the great quantity that would be required. The question is put, not because He felt any difficulty, but because He sought to awaken their interest and their thoughts.

Ver. 6.—“*And this He said to prove him: for He Himself knew what He would do.*” By the question He wished to test and strengthen Philip's faith. “This gives us a glimpse into the educational method of the great Teacher.” —Watkin.

Ver. 7.—“*Philip answered Him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.*” The money here amounts to about £7 of our currency. This, it would seem, was all the money they had; and he felt its utter insufficiency.

Vers. 8, 9.—“*One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto Him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small (R. V. OMITTS) fishes: but what are they (R. V. THESE) among so many?*” Andrew was one of the first of our Lord's disciples, but he seemed to have no more faith than Philip. Although both of them, in all probability, had seen Christ healing the nobleman's son (John iv. 46), giving the draught

of fishes (Luke v. 1), healing the demoniac, the paralytic, and the leper (Mark i. 21; Matt. viii. 2; Luke v. 19), restoring the man at Bethesda pool (John v. 5), healing the withered hand (Matt. xii. 9), and the centurion's servant (Luke ii. 7), and raising the widow's son at Nain (Luke vii. 11), they did not seem to realize the fact that He who put the question—their Master—was fully able to meet the difficulty.

Ver. 10.—“*And Jesus said, Make the men (R. v. PEOPLE) sit down.*” According to Mark and Luke, they sat down in ranks or companies. “*Now there was much grass in the place.*” The ancient Hebrews were in the habit of sitting on skins on the ground to eat their food. These five thousand sat down now on the fresh grass that had sprung up through the fertile rains of the season.

Ver. 11.—“*And Jesus took the loaves; and when He had (R. v. HAVING) given thanks, He distributed to the disciples, (R. v. OMITS) and the disciples to them that were set down.*” Bread and fish in this miracle proved Him Master both of earth and sea; and His giving thanks to His Father pointed their minds to Him from “Whom all blessings flow.”

Ver. 12.—“*When they were filled, He said unto His disciples, Gather up the fragments (R. v. BROKEN PIECES) that remain, that nothing be lost.*” “The Lord,” says one, “is lavish of His bounties, at the same time careful of His gifts.”

Ver. 13.—“*Therefore (R. v. SO) they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of (R. v. BROKEN PIECES FROM) the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.*” “In the synoptic Gospels, the disciples gather up the fragments of their own accord. In this Gospel the order to do so originated with Jesus. This was His triumphant answer to the calculation of Andrew and Philip.”—*Godet*. Here is a stupendous miracle, but such a one as is going on in nature constantly. A miracle not of creation, but of multiplication. Nature gives back to the husbandman in harvest manifold more than he committed to the earth in spring.

Ver. 14.—“*Then those men, when they had seen the miracle (R. v. WHEN THEREFORE THE PEOPLE SAW THE SIGN) that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that (R. v. THE) prophet that should come (R. v. THAT COMETH) into the world.*” John alone records this effect of the miracle. It falls in with his design, to show the Divinity of our Lord. Here therefore he gives the testimony of those who saw it wrought. “*That prophet.*” The prophet like unto Moses; they meant undoubtedly the Messiah. Is this narrative a myth? *Luthardt* says no. “The idea of a myth is opposed by the fact that this very event maintained its position in the consciousness of the early Christians as we perceive by the four evangelical accounts.”

HOMILETICS.

As we have elsewhere * made remarks on this miracle as recorded by Matthew, our observations now will be brief. We take the miracle as suggesting certain remarks concerning the *Beneficence of Christ*. Christ was not only benevolent, disposed to do good, but beneficent, *always doing good*. “He went about doing good.”

I.—HIS BENEFICENCE IS A POWERFUL ELEMENT OF ATTRACTION IN HIS CHARACTER.

“*A great multitude followed Him, because they saw His miracles which He did on them that were diseased.*” And then in the fifth verse it is said, that “*He lifted up His eyes, and saw a great company.*”

* See “Genius of the Gospel on Matthew,” page 337.

What attracted these multitudes? Not, as we have said, His wonders; for although wonders will ever arrest attention and excite curiosity, they will not attract unless they are beneficent. Had His miracles been works of wrath, devastation, death, and terror, they would have driven the multitudes in panic from His presence. The terrible wonders on the brow of Sinai did not tempt the millions at the base to climb to the summit; on the contrary, they were terrified exceedingly. It was the *beneficence* in Christ's miracles that drew after Him the multitudes. All His miracles were works of love. And this in His character is the great moral magnet that will one day draw all men unto Him. Beneficence always attracts. With what beauty and stirring force Job describes the influence of his own beneficence upon the men of his age amongst whom he lived. "The young men saw me, and hid themselves," etc. (Job xxix. 8—25). Ah! if what is called the Church of Christ on earth had, instead of indulging in acrimonious controversies cradling morbid and sanctimonious sentiments, and childishly attending to trumpery rites and ceremonies, exhibited Christly beneficence, how great the multitudes who would have followed after her! The captives would have looked to her for liberty, the poor for bread, the afflicted for healing, the naked for clothing, the oppressed for justice, and the sad everywhere for comfort and consolation. Why do not the multitudes follow the Church? Nay, why do they turn from her? This is a question that grows more pressing every day.

II.—HIS BENEFICENCE WAS EVER INSPIRED BY THE TENDEREST COMPASSION.

It is said in the other records of this miracle, that He "had compassion on the multitudes." This multitude was famishing for hunger. Though Christ crossed the sea in a vessel, they had to walk round on foot. It is probable they had journeyed all night, and when they reached Him on the other side they would be famishing for food. His compassion was moved as He beheld them. There are what are called beneficent acts that are done from *vanity*. The doers seek applause in their work. Such seek their gifts to be chronicled in records and trumpeted on platforms. Such acts are sometimes done from *avarice*. The doer seeks to win clients, patients, customers that will enrich his coffers, and administer to his greed. A large donation to a popular institution is one of the best commercial advertisements. And indeed such acts are not unfrequently stimulated by *superstition*. The doer seeks to win heaven and avoid hell by his benevolent deeds.

In sublime contrast to all this stands the beneficence of Christ. He was full of compassion—full, free, boundless compassion. Alas! how little of this compassion man has for man. In most cases man treats his brother with heartless indifference, and indeed in

many cases with a ruthless and savage cruelty. There is a fact recorded of Napoleon which may be taken as typical of that cruel class of men that abound in all ages. Flushed with his victories, he sailed with a numerous fleet and army to the East. Everywhere the enemy fell before his triumphant troops. He came to Jaffa—the ancient Joppa—a town in Palestine. On the fourth of March, 1799, he assailed it: two days after, it was taken. Terrible was the carnage that took place. In the midst of the slaughter 4000 men took shelter in an old caravanserai, and called out from the windows that they would surrender on condition that their lives were spared. Napoleon's aides-de-camp agreed to this, and led them before their general. The ruthless demon in human form received them with a stern and relentless air. He decreed that all should die, and signed the fatal order, which was executed on March 10th. Four thousand men, firmly fettered, were marched to the sand-hills on the sea-coast, and mowed down by the musketry amid shrieks that rent the heavens. In vain they prayed for mercy: every man was put to death. The bones of the vast multitude lie there to this day; it is a field of blood—a sad scene of Christian atrocity from which the Arab turns away in horror and disgust. Alas! Christendom calls the Napoleons, the conquerors, great and glorious. Bishops make prayers for their success, and mock Heaven by thanks for their triumphs. How infinitely antagonistic to the spirit of Him Whom Christendom calls Lord and Master, Who when He “beheld the multitudes, had compassion on them, and fed them!”

III.—HIS BENEFICENCE TRANSCENDS BOTH THE FAITH AND NEEDS OF MEN.

First: It transcends their *faith*. Philip said, “*Whence shall we buy bread?*” and Andrew, another disciple, when he heard of the “*five barley loaves and fishes*,” said, “*What are they among so many?*”

Their faith went not beyond the means they had in actual possession. For the time they seem to have had no idea that Christ was equal to the occasion; when He said, “*Make the men sit down*,” perhaps they thought it was little less than mockery. How could starving men sit down and rest?

Secondly: It transcends their *needs*. Jesus not only fed them, but after doing so, “*twelve basketfuls of fragments*” remained. Christ always gives more than is needed. In nature we have redundancy of light, and air, and water, and fruit, and beauty.

Nature that has fed the generations that are gone, has as much, if not more, for the generations yet to come. The fragments that remain are greater than the stock that has been used. “He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,” etc. His resources are exhaustless, His “riches unsearchable.”

His blessings seem to increase by appropriation: the more they are used, the more they seem to multiply and grow; thus God's great universe becomes more affluent every day.

IV.—HIS BENEFICENCE ALLOWS NO ENCOURAGEMENT TO WASTEFULNESS.

*"Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing may be lost."**

Use all, abuse nothing. In one sense nothing can be lost, not an atom of matter, not a thought of mind. Frugality is the duty of man both in his temporal and spiritual concerns.

V.—HIS BENEFICENCE IS A CONVINCING TESTIMONY OF HIS MESSIAHSHIP.

"Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world."†

First: Mere miracles would not be a sufficient proof of His Divinity. Other beings besides God might perform that which man would regard as miraculous. Who can prove that no being but the Almighty could produce results that in the judgment of feeble man would be universally regarded as miraculous? In truth, if the miracle was effected to enforce a doctrine repugnant to human reason and conscience, it would be spurned as undivine and devilish.

Secondly: Miracles that are beneficent are proofs of Divinity. These proofs were now felt by the people, and they said, *"This is of a truth that prophet."* This was the evidence that Christ gave to the deputation that John sent to Him from prison. "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them."

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. XXIV.

CHRIST FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND: HIS COMPASSION.

"When Jesus then lifted up His eyes," &c.—vi. 5—14.

This beautiful incident is fraught with glorious suggestions, and pulsates with the compassionate heart of Christ. Amongst the many subjects it illustrates, the chief is the benevolent interest of Christ in humanity. We learn—

I.—THAT HIS COMPASSION EXTENDS TO MAN'S PHYSICAL WANTS.

His love for souls, free, boundless, ever working, and ever-conquering, is the spirit of His glorious history; but here we learn that He is practically alive to the necessity of men's *bodies*. Here

* See Homily on these words at end of Volume. † See Germ below.

was a great company that required food. His interest in man's physical wants is seen—

First: In the provision He has made for them in the constitution of nature. The world which He has made abounds with everything we want physically. His interest is seen—

Secondly: In the wonderful facts of His life. How He attended to their bodies while here! The interest Christ has shown in men's bodies is a *reproof* to the Church for neglecting the material exigencies of the population, and is an indication of what His disciples must do before they rightly manifest Him.

II.—THAT HIS COMPASSION IS CONNECTED WITH AMPLE ABILITY TO SUPPLY.

"*Five thousand*" were now fed. His ample power of supplying appears—

First: In the operation of ordinary laws. How abundant are the provisions of the earth! All come from Christ's liberal hand.

Secondly: In extraordinary incidents. Thus it appears not only in the case before us, but in innumerable instances besides.

III.—THAT HIS COMPASSION IS EXERCISED IN CONNECTION WITH A DEVOUT SPIRIT.

"*When He had given thanks,*" &c. The lesson taught by this is, *that all temporal good comes from God.* This fact, practically realized, would sweeten for us the blessings of Providence, and give us an abiding impression of the presence and agency of God.

IV.—THAT HIS COMPASSION IS EVER EXERCISED FOR MORAL ENDS.

"*Then those men when they had seen the miracles that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth,*" &c. Christ blessed the bodies of men in order that He might bless their souls. So should we. He showed more favours than they could appreciate in order to prepare them to receive from His hands the higher blessing of eternal life.

No. XXXIV.

MAN AND CHRIST.

(*Jesus walks upon the water.*—MATT. xiv. 22—36; MARK vi. 45—54; JOHN vi. 15—21.)

"When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take Him by force, to make Him a king, He departed again into a mountain Himself alone," &c.—vi. 15—21.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 15.—
"When Jesus therefore perceived (R. V. PERCEIVING) that they would come and take Him by force, to make Him a king,

He departed (R. V. WITHDREW) *again into a mountain Himself alone.*" The facts recorded in these verses are also recorded with slight variation in Matt.

xiv. 22—36 ; Mark vi. 45—54.* The desire of the people to make Him a king was purely selfish and worldly. They wished it, not because of His pre-eminent intellectual and moral competency for ruling the nation righteously and usefully, but because of the material good which they expected from His reign. Jesus read their hearts, shrunk from their vulgar and gross ideas of power, and departed into a mountain alone. There, alone on the mountain, with His eye upon all the principles at work in society, He was infinitely more royal than all the Cæsars of the world. "Matthew and Mark add that He went to the mountain to pray. This juncture evidently coincides with the close of the 15th verse, and hence only a portion of the multitude, undoubtedly the more enthusiastic, remained upon the spot." *Godet.*

Ver. 16.—"*And when even was now come* (R. V. EVENING CAME), *His disciples went down unto the sea.*" Evening, with its deep shadows gathering on the little skiff, was not the most auspicious time to embark on the treacherous lake.

Ver. 17.—"*And entered into a ship* (R. V. BOAT), *and went over the sea toward* (R. V. WERE GOING OVER THE SEA UNTO) *Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.*" In Matthew and Mark it is said that Jesus "constrained" His disciples to go into the ship, and to go before Him. So they went forth by His will, and they might have expected a prosperous voyage. The expression that it "*was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them,*" gives us to understand that they expected He would overtake them on the voyage, and join them on the way. Probably Christ promised He would do so, when He constrained them to depart ; but night came on, and a storm was evidently brooding, but Christ had not come.

Ver. 18.—"*And the sea arose* (R. V. WAS RISING) *by reason of a great wind that blew.*" The lake, surrounded by hills and mountains, was always liable to sudden storms.

Ver. 19.—"*So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs.*" Mark says, "And He saw them toiling (*βασανίζόμενοι*) in rowing ; for the wind was contrary unto them." "*Five and twenty or thirty furlongs.*" This is about four miles, according to our measurement ; the vessel was therefore about half-way on its journey, and in the midst of the sea. "*They see* (R. V. BEHOLD) *Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship* (R. V. BOAT) : *and they were afraid.*" Mark's account is more full than this. He says : "And about the fourth watch of the night He cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them. But when they saw Him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit (*φάντασμα*), and cried out : for they all saw Him, and were troubled."

Ver. 20.—"*But He saith unto them, It is I ; be not afraid.*" *εγώ*, literally, "I am." *Who?* Whosoever you require to help you. *What?* Whatsoever you require to make you glorious, useful, and blessed here and yonder.

Ver. 21.—"*Then they willingly received* (R. V. THEY WERE WILLING THEREFORE TO RECEIVE) *Him into the ship* (R. V. BOAT) : *and immediately* (R. V. STRAIGHTWAY) *the ship* (R. V. BOAT) *was at the land whither they went*" (R. V. WERE GOING). "*They received Him willingly.*" Literally, they were willing to receive Him into the ship, as they had not been at first, on account of their fear ; and immediately, by the calming of the sea, &c., through His providential favouring, the boat was at the land. Both Matthew and Mark proceed further with the history of this event.

HOMILETICS.

Our subject is *Man and Christ*. Here we see man manifesting various states of mind in relation to Christ. Here we have—

* See "Genius of the Gospel," Matthew, p. 343.

I.—MEN VULGARLY ESTIMATING CHRIST.

"They would come and take Him by force, to make Him a king." They estimated Him according to their own views and feelings. Because they regarded worldly wealth as the highest position, worldly authority as the highest dignity, worldly pomp and pageantry as the highest glory, they thought that Christ would accept the office of a worldly monarch. Perhaps, as they approached Him with the offer of a worldly kingdom, they expected He would hail with enthusiasm the opportunity, and bound at once into regal splendour and power. But they were mistaken. *"He departed again into a mountain Himself alone."** His pure spirit recoiled from the grossness of the thought: hence He sends them away, and retires to the solitude and silence of the hills, to commune with the Infinite. The millions in all ages have always formed these worldly estimates of Christ. They are unable to form a correct idea of that kingdom which "consisteth not in meat and drink," but in "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost"—a kingdom that "cometh not with observation;" a kingdom whose foundation is immutable rectitude; which legislates for thoughts and moral motives; whose authority is enforced, not by cannons, swords, or bayonets, but by love and truth. Oh, speed the day when men shall form a true estimate of Christ! Here we have—

II.—MEN CONSCIOUSLY NEEDING CHRIST.

"It was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew." It was night—dark, bewildering, oppressive night; and they, in a frail bark in the midst of the sea, were being beaten by the winds and dashed by the waves. Their perils were imminent and thickening. Who shall guide them safely to their destined haven? They are painfully conscious of their own inability. Their strength is exhausted, and they are at their wits' end. They all feel that if Christ—He who had just fed five thousand with a few loaves and fishes—would come to them, He could rescue them, and He only. We may fancy how anxiously they looked out for Him. It is seldom so dark at sea but that you can see some distance. How they would strain their eyes, hoping for a glance at Him: how they would bend the ear, hoping to catch the echo of His voice! The time hastens when every man will feel painfully conscious of his need of Christ. We are all on a treacherous sea. The night is coming on, and with the night, the storm.

Be Thou my Guide on life's tempestuous sea,
Be Thou my Guide;

* See Germ, p. 151.

The waves run high and all seems dark to me,
 Be Thou my Guide.
 Take Thou the helm, and steer me safely o'er
 Life's surging sea to the celestial shore.

Here we have—

III.—MEN IGNORANTLY DREADING CHRIST.

"They see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid." He needed no skiff to bear Him over the billows. "The Lord is mightier than the mighty waves of the sea." But why were they "*afraid*"? Matthew and Mark say they thought He was a spirit. Observe three things—

First: Man has a tendency to dread visitants from the spirit-world. Even Peter—bold Peter, who with his sword smote Malchus—trembles before an imaginary spirit. The vision of a supposed ghost never fails to strike terror into the heart of the spectator. Why should men be afraid of spirits? Are they not themselves spirits, and members of the great spiritual system? Is not their Father God Spirit? Why afraid? Consciousness of guilt: this is the philosophy of all the terror.

Secondly: This tendency to dread the supernatural is a great evil. It is the source of all superstition; and superstition has been, and still is, one of the greatest curses of the race. Superstitious fear is eternally opposed to all true spiritual knowledge, virtue, and progress.

Thirdly: Christ's mission is to eradicate from the human soul this dread of the supernatural. "*It is I; be not afraid.*" It is I; do not be afraid of anything in the universe, either spiritual or material, for I am absolute Master of all. Do not be afraid of God, for He has sent Me to demonstrate to you by My teaching, My life, and My death the unconquerableness and tenderness of His love to you. "*It is I; be not afraid*" of Me, for I am come, not to destroy, but to save. "*It is I; be not afraid.*" Thank God for this EGO EIMI!

Here we have—

IV.—MEN CORDIALLY WELCOMING CHRIST.

"Then they willingly received Him into the ship." To receive Him was what they wished above all things. Because they had painfully felt their need of Him, they hailed Him with enthusiasm on board their little skiff. It is ever so. When once men have, by a deep conviction of their guilt, been overwhelmed by a sense of their moral danger, they will stretch out their arms widely to receive Him, crying, "Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly." It is when the soul feels itself sinking into the abysses of moral misery it will look to heaven, and say, "O Saviour, take the helm and

pilot me." With Him on board they soon and safely reached port. "*Immediately*," &c. &c. Brother, take Him on board thy bark, give Him the rudder, &c.

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. XXV.

CHRIST REJECTING POPULARITY, AND SEEKING SOLITUDE.

"He departed again into a mountain Himself alone."—vi. 15.

There are two things in the text concerning Christ remarkably significant.

I.—HIS REJECTION OF POPULARITY.

The popularity of Christ was now at its zenith. The feeding of the five thousand by the miracle He had just wrought, struck the populace for the hour with an enthusiastic admiration. "*They would take Him by force, to make Him a king.*" They would bear Him in their arms to Jerusalem, there to enthrone Him as the Monarch of their country. The world has nothing higher to give a man than a crown, and this the people of Judæa were anxious to confer on Jesus now. But how does He feel amidst all this thunder of popular Hosannas? Does He seize the offer made? No; He seems to recoil, with an ineffable disgust, both from their laudations and their proffered honours. Two things are suggested here—

First: The moral worthlessness of popularity. Christ peered into the souls of the multitude, and saw there nothing but worldly thoughts, corrupt feelings, and unvirtuous aims. "Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man." All their notions of glory were grossly material. The ideas of spiritual sovereignty and spiritual honour which He inculcated had not touched their carnal souls. So long as the world is what it is, popularity is a worthless thing, a thing which only charlatans will pursue. Another thing suggested here is—

Secondly: The spiritual superiority of Christ. Whilst a few great men in every age may despise popularity, the millions prize it. Small men, both in Church and State, struggle after it as a prize, and worship it as a god. Why did Christ refuse the crown now offered to Him by enthusiastic admirers, and which His Almighty power would have enabled Him to wear with safety and splendour? Why? Because He was infinitely above such a worthless toy. Another thing in the text concerning Christ, remarkably significant, is—

II.—HIS WITHDRAWMENT INTO SOLITUDE.

"*He departed again into a mountain Himself alone.*" Christ often sought solitude. The stillness and secrecy of the hills at night would be thrice welcome to Him after the tumult of the day. In this Christ has left us an example, for we need solitude as well as society, to train our natures into Christ-like goodness.

First: Solitude is the best scene for self-communion.

Secondly: Solitude is the best scene for fellowship with the Eternal.

Thirdly: Solitude is the best scene for the formation of holy resolutions. "Enter into your closet, and shut your door, and the Father which seeth in secret will openly reward you." The soul resembles a tree in this, it requires the publicity of the open heavens, and the secrecy of the hidden depths, in order to grow to perfection. The spirit of the tree must go down into the dark quiet chambers of the earth to drink nourishment into its roots, and up into the lofty branches to be shone on by the sun, and tossed by the tempest.

No. XXXV.

MAN WRONGLY SEEKING CHRIST, AND CHRIST RIGHTLY DIRECTING MAN.

(*Our Lord's discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum. Many disciples turn back. Peter's profession of faith.*—JOHN vi. 22—71; vii. 1.)

"The day following, when the people which stood," &c.—vi. 22—27.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 22.—"*The day following* (R. V. ON THE MORROW) *when the people* (R. V. MULTITUDE) *which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto His disciples were entered* (R. V. SAVE ONE, AND THAT JESUS ENTERED), *and that Jesus went not with His disciples into the boat, but that His disciples were gone* (R. V. WENT) *away alone.*" "The Evangelist here relates what the multitude had noticed as to the facts of Christ's departure—viz. that there was but one boat; that this they saw go away without Christ: and hence, that as they found Him next day at Capernaum, He must have gone across in some unexplained manner. This statement is given to show how their observation of the facts correspond with the miracle."

Ver. 23.—"*Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place*

where they did eat (R. V. AT THE) *bread, after that the Lord had given thanks.*" "These boats, perhaps, were driven by the contrary wind across the lake. Their coming probably explains the reference to the disciples in ver. 24. At first the multitude might have supposed that they had returned in one of them from some brief mission to the other side."—Westcott.

Ver. 24.—"*When the people therefore* (R. V. MULTITUDE) *saw that Jesus was not there, neither His disciples, they also took shipping* (R. V. GOT INTO THE BOATS), *and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.*" These people had witnessed, we understand from the twenty-second verse, that Jesus did not go with His disciples into the boat, but that they went alone; and they now felt anxious to find out the place where Jesus actually was. "*They also took shipping.*" It is not necessary to suppose that the whole five

thousand "took shipping;" for although Josephus informs us there were about 230 vessels always crowding that sea, they would not have been sufficient to have conveyed such a vast multitude.

Ver. 25.—"And when they had found Him on the other side of the sea, they said unto Him, Rabbi, when camest Thou hither?" They were astonished at finding Him in that spot, and wondered how He could have gained the place, whether by land or water. They could not see how, unless He had travelled all night round the head of the lake alone, He could have reached Capernaum before they themselves arrived. They had no idea that He had walked on the waves of the sea, and hence they ask, "When camest Thou hither?" "When?" Here Thou art; but how couldst Thou reach this city so speedily?

Ver. 26.—"Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles (R. V. SIGNS), but because ye did eat (R. V. ATE) of the loaves, and were

filled." He does not answer their question, He does not tell them how, in the might and majesty of the God-head, He had trod the waters; nor does He even take notice of their question, but hits at once the miserable spirit that animated them—flippant, inquisitive, greedy.

Ver. 27.—"Labour (R. V. WORK) not for the meat which perisheth, but for that (R. V. THE) meat which endureth (R. V. ABIDETH) unto everlasting (R. V. ETERNAL) life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father (R. V. THE FATHER, EVEN GOD, HATH) sealed." What meaneth the last clause? τοῦτον γὰρ ὁ πατήρ ἐσφράγισεν ὁ θεός. "Him hath the Father sealed." "Sealed." Appointed, accredited as His Divine Messenger. He gave Him the stamp of Divinity, not merely by His sublime character and transcendent doctrines, but by His miracles and special declarations, as on the banks of the Jordan, on Tabor, and in the Temple. He is the authenticated Witness of the Father (Rev. i. 5).

HOMILETICS.

These verses present to us two great subjects of vital and universal interest, viz. *Man wrongly seeking Christ, and Christ rightly directing man.*

I. MAN WRONGLY SEEKING CHRIST.

"When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither His disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus." What was the spirit that animated these multitudes, that crossed the sea in quest of Christ? Was it a sincere love for His character, strong sympathy with His mission, or an earnest desire to understand the Divine Will concerning them? Not at all. The spirit that animated them seems to have been distinguished by two things—

First: *Curiosity.* His arrival at Capernaum so speedily after the miracle of the loaves and the fishes was a phenomenon that struck them with amazement, and roused their inquisitiveness. Men in all ages have been animated by this idle curiosity in their inquiries concerning Christ. The facts of His biography have appeared so wonderful to them, that they have been stimulated to investigation. Some have searched the facts in order to disprove them, and to show that they were mere myths and fables. Others,

in order to explain away their supernaturalness, and to show that they can all be accounted for on the ordinary laws that govern the world. And others have prosecuted an inquiry into them in order to build up some ingenious theory. Now there is in man the instinct of inquisitiveness. This is what is called the philosophic spirit, and is the spring of all knowledge. It is intended by our Maker to lead us on in the attainment of truth, for ever on. But this instinct, like all other instincts of our nature, has been sadly perverted. In the case before us, it was inspired by unworthy motives, and it became mere idle curiosity. The spirit was distinguished by—

Secondly: *Greed*. “*And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said unto Him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.*” They did not come to have further manifestations of His Divine nature and character, they did not come to Him for His sake, but for their own. By the miracle of the loaves and fishes they knew He could serve their material interests, and for this they sought Him. “*Loaves and fishes,*” these became their motives. Has not this selfish, this utilitarian principle animated thousands in every age in their searchings concerning Christ? Loaves and fishes make many Christian authors, preachers, bishops, and members of Churches. As Christianity grows in popularity, the temptation to follow it augments in force. It was never stronger than in England to-day.

II. CHRIST RIGHTLY DIRECTING MEN.

“*Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed.*” The meaning of this is, work not supremely for mere material good. These words suggest three thoughts concerning spiritual sustentation—

First: That soul-food is provided for men. There is a “*meat which endureth unto everlasting life.*” What is this “*meat*”? Christ answers this question in the subsequent part of the chapter. He speaks of Himself as the “*bread of life.*” “*I am the bread of life.*” And again He says, “*My flesh is meat indeed, My blood is drink indeed.*” What does this mean? The language, of course, is highly figurative; but the idea expressed is clear—namely, that there is something in Christ that we might take unto ourselves as the very nourishment of our souls. What is that something? *His moral spirit*, which is in truth His very life-blood;—the “*blood shed for the remission of sins.*” What is that spirit? *Self-sacrificing love*. This was the very soul of His soul, and this is the spiritual food of humanity. We cannot live without

it; for "he that hath not the spirit of Christ is none of His." Without it, Paul tells us, we are "nothing." It may be represented as food for two reasons—

(1.) *It satisfies the hunger of the soul.* As bread allays the gnawings of corporeal hunger, the moral spirit of Christ taken into us allays the spiritual, and nothing else can. This spirit is the water which quencheth the moral thirst. He who is filled with it has a blessed satisfaction.

(2.) *It invigorates the powers of the soul.* As bread strengthens the body, this spirit strengthens the soul. The man who is filled with the self-sacrificing love of Christ, is strong to suffer, strong to labour, strong in duty. He alone grows into the true hero.

Secondly: That soul-food requires the chief labour of man. "*Labour not for the bread that perisheth.*" This does not mean, of course, that we are to employ no effort to get our physical wants supplied; but that those efforts should not be so strenuous and persistent as those which are employed to get the higher good. Our chief labour should be for this—

(1.) *Because it is indispensable to our well-being.* Whatever else we have, if we have not this spirit in us, we have nothing that can make us fully and permanently happy.

(2.) *Because it can only be obtained by the most earnest efforts.* We can only get the spirit into us.—(1.) By meditation. Profound thinking upon the biography of Christ. (2.) By imitation. We must follow Him. (3.) By supplication. We must implore Him to fill us with the Spirit, that we may "become conformable to His death."

Thirdly: That soul-food is the gift of Christ. "*Which the Son of man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed;*" that is, marked out and authenticated for the transcendent work of giving this food to hungry souls. Christ gives it—

(1.) *By His teaching.* Everywhere throughout His discourses does He inculcate the self-sacrificing love—the love which leads to the surrendering of everything, and of the taking up of the cross.

(2.) *By His spirit.* His spirit conveys it into the soul. Self-sacrificing love for God and man is indeed the gift of Christ. The world knew nothing of this spirit till He came and gave Himself a ransom for sinners. This spirit is in the highest sense the moral "flesh and blood of Christ." He poured forth this precious spirit upon the world to cleanse it from all sin. This spirit alone makes men truly happy and blest. "There never," says *Sir Walter Scott*, "did, and never will exist, anything permanently noble and excellent in a character which was a stranger to the exercise of resolute self-denial. Teach self-denial; and make its practice pleasurable, and you create for the world a destiny more sublime than ever issued from the brain of the wildest dreamer." *This is Christ's work.*

No XXXVI.

EVANGELICAL FAITH.

"Then said they (R. V. THEY SAID THEREFORE) unto Him, What shall (R. V. MUST) we do, that we might (R. V. MAY) work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent."—vi. 28, 29.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 28.—*"What shall we do?"* "The questioners appear to admit in word the necessity of the higher aim of work, and inquire as to the method of reaching it."—*Westcott*. As He had just exhorted them to concern themselves chiefly for another kind of food, they take Him up at His word, and ask what they are to do to comply with this that He proposes (the same word is used here as is rendered "labour" in ver. 27).

They seem to understand Him so far as to inquire what kind of work He exhorts them to do, and how they shall work such works of the law as God requires.

Ver. 29.—*"This is the work of God."* He speaks not of works. They had thought of a round of legal works, which should be acceptable to God. There is but one work properly speaking, and this is no legal work.

HOMILETICS.

We regard these words as illustrating a subject on which there is much talk, but little true intelligence, namely, *Evangelical faith*. The words present two facts explanatory of this subject.

I.—EVANGELICAL FAITH IS FAITH IN THE PERSONAL CHRIST.

"This is the work of God," said Christ in answer to the question of His hearers, *"that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent."*

Evangelical faith is faith, not in *propositions*, whatever may be the amount of truth they embody, but faith in a *person*, and that person Christ Himself. This faith therefore stands in contradistinction to three things—

(1.) To faith in the *theology of any Church*. Millions in Christendom not only imagine, but propound the idea that evangelical faith consists in the acceptance of the articles of their Church. This is an error as pernicious as it is popular. This faith stands in contradistinction—

(2.) To faith in the *teaching of Christ Himself*. To believe in all the doctrines that Christ Himself propounded, is one thing; and to believe *in Him*, is another and very different thing. I may believe in the ethical teachings of Lord Bacon, and yet have no faith in him—in the scientific teaching of Stuart Mill, and yet have no faith in him—in the religious teaching of Calvin, and yet have no faith in him. In like manner, it is possible for me to accept the ethical and theological teaching of Christ, and yet have no faith in Him. This faith stands in contradistinction—

(3.) To faith in the *biography of Christ*. I may believe in all the facts of a man's life from his cradle to his grave, and yet have

no faith in *him*. A man may accept the entire history of Christ as given in the Gospels, and yet have no trust in Him. Far enough am I from disparaging the importance of accepting as true the doctrines Christ propounded, or as real the facts of His history. Indeed, such acceptance I hold to be helpful if not indispensable to lead me up to a true faith in Him. Evangelical faith, then, I must maintain, is not faith in *propositions*, whether the propositions embody tenets of the most orthodox Church, or the teachings of Christ Himself, or even all the facts of His wonderful life. But it is faith in Him—

First: As the highest Embodiment of Divine excellence. We cannot set our entire faith on an imperfect being, still less on one of a corrupt character. To repose our utmost confidence in a being, we must not only be assured of his excellence, but that his excellence is absolutely complete—that he is all wise, all just, all loving, and all pure.

Secondly: As the faithful Revealer of the Great God. The Eternal has many revealers, but there is only One absolutely perfect. “No man hath seen God at any time: the Only Begotten of the Father, He hath declared Him.” “He is the image of the invisible God, the express image of His person.”

Thirdly: As the only Redeemer of mankind. Faith in Him means accepting Him as the only infallible Physician that can heal us of the malady of sin, the only Deliverer that can emancipate our spirits from the thralldom of depravity, the only sure Guide that can conduct us safely through the intricate, the shadowy, the perilous wilderness of life to a blessed immortality.

Such is the faith everywhere insisted upon by the teaching of Christ. “He that believeth in Me.” This was His constant utterance. “In ME,” not in what men say about Me, not merely in Mine—My teaching or My acts, but MYSELF. Such, and such only, He taught should be saved, should have life, should be useful.

II.—FAITH IN THE PERSONAL CHRIST IS THE PARAMOUNT WORK OF MANKIND.

“*This is the work of God.*” * Instead of faith standing opposed to work, it is *the* work of works. It is the spring and glory of all works. But, it is said, is not faith the “gift of God”? Verily. But whilst God gives some things irrespective of our labour, such as existence, sun, air, water—other gifts, such as the crops of the husbandman, the daily bread of the labourer, the mental attainments of the student, are only obtained in connection with human effort. So it is with this faith; it requires work, and work of the hardest kind.

* See Homily on these words at end of the volume.

(1.) It is the work of *earnest investigation*. Before you can have faith in Christ, you must meet with Him; and you can only find Him out by resolute, honest, and persevering research. He is in the Bible; and the Scriptures must be searched. (2.) It is the work of *firmly holding*. When you find Him, you must hold Him fast. There are so many forces within and without, that turn you away from Him, that to hold on requires all the vigour of your soul. You must hold on as the drowning man holds on to the rope thrown out to his rescue. (3.) It is the work of *persistent following*. We must keep close to our Guide, or we shall be lost, follow our Commander, or we shall be slain in the battle. This is the work.

First: It is a work binding alike on all men. God legislates for our beliefs; and He demands that we should set our great faith on His Son. It is not a matter of indifference as to whether you shall believe on Him or not; it is a matter of urgent obligation. Non-believing on Him is the one great crime.

Secondly: It is a work performable alike by all men. It may be impossible for all men to believe on the same proposition—impossible for men to believe even in characters that are imperfect or corrupt. But all *can* believe in a character that embodies man's highest ideal of perfection.

Thirdly: It is a work indispensable alike to all men. This work is the great necessity of every man. It is indispensable to a man's own spiritual well-being. We are so constituted that nothing but faith can produce a reformation of the soul; no sacerdotal influences, no ritual observances, no mere legal efforts can do it. There must be faith. No faith in *propositions* can do it: there must be faith in a *Person*, and that Person must be none other than the Son of God. Hence the Apostles everywhere directed men to believe on Christ. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." It is indispensable, also, in order to qualify a man to be spiritually useful to others. "He that believeth on *Me*," saith Christ, "shall do the greater works." Why are ministers, why are Christians generally, so unsuccessful in their efforts to convert men? Simply because they either lack faith, or they set their faith on something short of Christ. Their faith is in obsolete dogmas, or hoary creeds, or their own little crotchets or superstitious dreams, and not in Christ as the living, loving, personal Son of God and Saviour of the world.

CONCLUSION. Here then is evangelical faith. It is faith in the Person of Christ, and this is the great work of mankind. Whilst I have no sympathy whatever with those morbid religionists the burden of whose addresses is "Only believe," I am profoundly convinced that the great want of the world is faith in Christ. Let us go for our faith, not to Churches, not to libraries, not to

priesthoods, but to Judæa, and put ourselves in close and permanent contact with Him Who said, "All things are possible to him that believeth."

No. XXXVII.

A TWOFOLD MANIFESTATION.

"They said therefore unto Him, What sign shewest Thou then, that we may see, and believe Thee?" &c.—vi. 30—36.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 30.—"*They said therefore unto Him, What sign shewest Thou then* (R. V. WHAT THEN DOEST THOU FOR A SIGN), *that we may see, and believe Thee? What dost Thou work*" (R. V. WORKEST THOU)? "*What dost Thou work?*" Here they wished, as it were, to present again and give back to Christ the word *work*. We return it, and say, "*What dost Thou work?*" "So rude and insolent is man! The point would be far less fine if they had added the *ού*, which is only carried on from what precedes. They have comprehended the greatness and difficulty of the demand which Christ makes upon them. In order to be able to require so much and to make upon us the demand to give up ourselves, Thou must do much greater works in proof of Thy authority than Thou hast yet done. Thou requirest infinitely more than Moses, and yet Moses did a much greater work. Thy feeding cannot compare with the miracle of the manna."—Hengstenberg. "*Thou,*" though not in the Greek, is emphatic. What dost Thou produce?

Ver. 31.—"*Our fathers did eat* (R. V. ATE) *manna in the desert* (R. V. WILDERNESS); *as it is written, He gave them bread from* (R. V. OUT OF) *heaven to eat.*" For accounts of this manna see Exodus xvi.; Numbers xi. 7—9; Joshua v. 12. It continued for forty years, it had the taste of coriander-seed mixed with honey and olive oil: it fell on the dew, and was therefore preserved from the dust; it fell daily, and became rancid if kept over the Sabbath; it amounted daily to about ninety-four thousand four hundred and sixty-six bushels, and that continued for forty years. They forgot that their fathers disbelieved Moses almost from the time

of their eating the manna, which descended miraculously, feeding two millions every day.

Ver. 32.—"*Then Jesus* (R. V. THEREFORE) *said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses* (R. V. IT WAS NOT MOSES THAT) *gave you not that* (R. V. THE) *bread from* (R. V. OUT OF) *heaven; but My Father giveth you the true bread from* (R. V. OUT OF) *heaven.*" It was not Moses that gave you that bread; he was the mere instrument, nor did it come from heaven. It came from the atmosphere, and then it was not the true bread, the bread that fed man as man.

Ver. 33.—"*For the bread of God is He* (R. V. THAT) *which cometh down from* (R. V. OUT OF) *heaven, and giveth life unto the world.*" The "*bread of God,*" that is, the bread which God provides, is really of heavenly origin and quality, and it is He which cometh down from heaven. The manna which fell in the wilderness came from the clouds, the "*bread of God*" came from the spiritual heavens.

Ver. 34.—"*Then said* (R. V. THEY SAID THEREFORE) *they unto Him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.*" "The similarity," says Hengstenberg, "of the answer of the Jews here to the answer of the Samaritan woman in John iv. 15, is explained by the fact, that it is the same Jesus who draws forth both the one and the other answer. On both occasions He had placed in prospect a glorious good—there a precious drink, here a precious food; and not until He had called forth the expression of desire for it, did He explain the connection of this good with His own person."

Ver. 35.—"*And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life.*" You ask for the bread of heaven, here it is,

I am that bread. "These words," said Luther, "should be written on the heart with golden letters." "He that cometh to Me shall never (R. V. NOT) hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." I satisfy for ever the deep craving of humanity.

Ver. 36.—*But I said unto you, That ye also have seen Me, and (R. V. YET) believe not.*" He means to say, You appropriate not the true bread because you believe not in Me. Although you see Me, you will not believe.

HOMILETICS.

We have here a *twofold manifestation*—one of the *depravity of men*, and the other of the *mercy of God*.

I.—A MANIFESTATION OF THE DEPRAVITY OF MEN.

The words which the Jews addressed on this occasion to Christ are a sad revelation of their moral wrongness. Mark—

First: Their *ingratitude*. "*What sign showest Thou?*" Why, only yesterday they had witnessed the miracle of the loaves and fishes, when five thousand people were fed, and basketfuls of fragments taken up unused. He had just, too, hushed the storm at sea, and walked upon the waves. All this, forsooth, they seem now to overlook and disregard. One might have thought that the wonders of mercy that they had already seen would not only have convinced them of His Messiahship, but overwhelmed them with gratitude and devotion. Ingratitude is one of the commonest and basest of vices.

"Time hath a wallet at his bark
Wherein he puts alms for oblivion,
A great sized moulder of ingritudes;
Those scraps are good deeds past; which are devoured
As fast as they are made, forgot as soon as done."—*Shakspeare*.

Mark—

Secondly: Their *ignorance*. If they were in earnest for more miracles in order to believe, it showed their ignorance of what is necessary to produce faith. Mere miracles cannot insure faith. The history of the Israelites during their forty years' wanderings in the wilderness was a history of miracles, yet they believed not; their unbelief was their crime and their ruin. Furthermore, the multiplication of miracles would destroy their effect. The power of miracles is in their rarity, not in their commonness. The men who are looking out—and they abound everywhere—for more evidence than they have, show, not only their ingratitude, but their ignorance as well. "If ye believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will ye believe though one rose from the dead." Mark—

Thirdly: Their *unspirituality*. "*Lord, evermore give us this bread.*" "They judged after the flesh," and concluded that the "*bread*" to which Christ had referred as the bread of God was mere material bread—bread to strengthen and satisfy their body.

They were too carnal to discover the truth which Christ propounded, namely, that He Himself was the true bread of the soul. Truly, "the carnal mind discerneth not the things of the Spirit, neither can he know them," for they are spiritually discerned. Alas that men, endowed with a spiritual nature, should be conscious only of corporeal wants, and crave only after material good!

Fourthly: Their *folly*. "*Evermore give us this bread.*" They desired to have this material food, irrespective of their efforts, given to them continually, as the manna in the wilderness, day by day. Their impression seems to have been, that to have the means of subsistence and satisfaction independent of labour was supremely desirable. Great folly this! One of the greatest blessings of humanity is that Divine law which requires men to work for their livelihood. Labour is the condition of physical strength, intellectual development, and moral discipline.

Such are the bad moral attributes which the language of these Jews reveals; and such attributes, alas! are as prevalent now. Ingratitude, ignorance, unspirituality, and folly mark the history of unrenewed men in all ages and lands.

We have here—

II.—A MANIFESTATION OF THE MERCY OF GOD.

First: *In the bestowment of a transcendent gift.* Observe (1.) The *necessity* of the gift. It is "*bread.*" The true bread from heaven. What material bread is to the body, Christ-spiritual bread is to the soul,—essential to its sustenance and satisfaction. It is a necessity of being. Men want bread, not theories of bread. Preachers throughout Christendom have been giving hungry souls theories (creeds) of Christ, and they are morally starving everywhere. The necessities of life are the invaluable things. (2.) The *nature* of the gift. What is the bread? It is Christ Himself. "*I am the bread of life.*" Christ Himself is the food of souls. What a gift is this! "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." The universe is nothing in point of value to this. (3.) The *universality* of the gift. "*Giveth life unto the world.*" This bread is not provided for a class, but for the race: not for particular men, but for humanity. What a manifestation, then, of Divine mercy you have in this transcendent gift—a gift vital to the well-being of man. Nothing less than Christ Himself, and intended for the whole race.

This mercy appears—

Secondly: *In the simplicity of the condition on which the personal enjoyment of the gift depends.* That condition is represented here as coming to Christ, and as believing on Him. "*He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.*" Christ only becomes food for the human soul, appeasing

its hunger, quenching its thirst, satisfying all its powers, so far as He is approached with unbounded confidence and love. And all may thus approach Him. It is no hard condition; nothing is more simple, in fact, than to trust the undoubtedly Trustworthy, and to love the undoubtedly Good. Men are made to believe, and made to love; and the more manifestly true and good a being is, the more easy the faith and the love.

CONCLUSION. O hungry and thirsty souls, come in love and faith to Christ, and you shall *never hunger, never thirst*. Believe me, there is nothing else on this round earth, nothing in the universe of God, that can support and satisfy your natures. "Where, but in the bosom of Christianity, has the heaven-born soul found its rest and peace, its cravings satisfied, its aspirations filled, and its highest heaven of hope realized? A bright cloud of witnesses respond, 'Nowhere but in Jesus Christ.'"

No. XXXVIII.

CHRIST IN RELATION TO THE ABSOLUTE WILL.

"All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out," &c.—vi. 37—40.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 37.—*"All that (R. V. THAT WHICH) the Father giveth Me shall come to (R. V. UNTO) Me."* The word "*all*" is in the neuter gender, and therefore does not necessarily include men. It may include power, dominion, success. Christ ascribes everything to His Father. He regarded the mediatorial power He received after His resurrection as from His Father. "All power is *given* unto Me." Even the political power that Pilate had to condemn Him to death, He ascribed to His Father. "Thou couldst have no power at all against Me except it were given thee from above." Indeed, Christ speaks of Judas as being given to Him. "Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept; but the son of perdition." We do not see Calvinian election here. "*Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.*" Here is the masculine gender. Whoever the man may be that comes to Christ, he will be received; on no account will he be rejected. A more faithful translation of the verse cannot perhaps be given than that of Dean Alford: "All which the Father giveth to Me

shall come to Me, and he that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."

Ver. 38.—"*For I came (R. V. AM COME) down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.*" Mark His origin. Heaven—where is that? Where the presence of the Eternal is especially manifest. Mark His mission: "*Not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.*"

Ver. 39.—"*And this is the Father's will which (R. V. WILL OF HIM THAT) hath sent Me, that of all which (R. V. THAT WHICH) He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.*" Who can tell what the Father has given Christ? He has given Him the universe. Whatever He has given Him He will take care of,—answer for the whole at the "*last day.*" ἰσχύειν ἡμέρα. Does Paul refer to this, when he says: "Then cometh the end when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power." "*Raise it*"—not them—"up again at the last day." On the last day there will be many resurrec-

tions besides the resurrection of men. The resurrections of buried truth, dead consciences, abused mercies, etc.

Ver. 40.—“*And* (R. V. FOR) *this is the will of Him that sent Me* (R. V. MY FATHER), *that every one which seeth* (R. V. BEHOLDETH) *the Son, and be-*

lieveth on Him, may (R. V. SHOULD) *have everlasting* (R. V. ETERNAL) *life: and I will raise him up at the last day.*” Here is the condition of everlasting happiness. Seeing the Son, and believing on Him.

HOMILETICS.

The subject of these words is, *Christ in relation to the absolute will*. The words teach, concerning the Father, the Great Head of the universe—(1.) He has a Will. He is not unintelligent force, blind and resistless; He is a free mind. He wills. (2.) He has a Will in relation to humanity. He has not left men to chance or fate, but taken them into His purpose and plan. (3.) That Christ is the great Interpreter and Administrator of this Will. He came down from heaven to do it. Of all who ever trod this earth, He alone knows the whole will of the Father. He was in the bosom of the Father. He knows the inmost purpose of the Eternal fountain of life. The verses lead us to consider two things in relation to Christ and the Divine will.

I.—CHRIST REVEALS HIMSELF TO MAN IN RELATION TO THE DIVINE WILL.

The words teach,—

First: That He had a thorough knowledge of it. He speaks of it as a subject with which He was perfectly acquainted; He knew it in all its relations and bearings upon humanity through the ages.

Secondly: That He had unbounded confidence in it. “*All that the Father giveth Me, shall come to Me.*” * He knew that that will would never break down, but would be realized on every point. He knew that the Father intended Him to have power, and He would have it; success in His mission, and He would have it; genuine disciples, and He would have them; a spiritual kingdom, and He would have it.

Thirdly: He cordially acquiesced in it. “*Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.*” It is His will that men should come to Me as their Teacher, Example, Redeemer, and I am willing to receive all. I will on no account “*cast*” any man away. I will not cast him away on account of the greatness of his age, or the number and enormity of his sins. When I come into possession of all that My Father wills Me to have, instead of using it to crush the sinner I will receive him, “*I will in no wise cast out.*”

Fourthly: He absolutely obeyed it. “*I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.*” † He was influenced by no personal consideration; He committed

* See Homily on these words at end of volume. † See Germ, p. 165.

Himself absolutely to the working out of the Divine will. His meat and His drink was to do the will of His Father.

II.—CHRIST REVEALS TO THE WORLD THE DIVINE WILL IN RELATION TO HUMANITY.

He taught that it was the will of God—

First: That they should be *everlastingly happy* through Him. "*This is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life.*"* Here is the true ground for belief in the immortality of the soul. Some men ground their faith in the immortality of the soul upon what they call its immateriality. But as no science can inform me what matter is: how can I predicate concerning immateriality? Some ground their faith on the undeveloped powers of the soul at death. But do we not find everywhere, in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, millions of existences dying with undeveloped powers? Some ground their faith on the instinctive longings of the human soul for a future state. But have not men on all hands instinctive longings here for things they can never have, and were never intended to have—such as long life, wealth, fame, dominion? Some ground their faith on the idea that men have not justice done them here; that the Divine government here makes no distinction between the righteous and the wicked. But does not the greatest sufferer feel in his conscience he has less punishment than he deserves? I rest my faith in immortality on the revealed will of the Absolute One. All existences are either contingent or absolute, dependent or independent. There is but One Absolute Existence, and that is God; and all others depend upon His "*will.*" The only way in which I can ascertain the duration of any creature's existence, is to ascertain the Creator's will concerning him. If the Creator has willed that he shall go out of existence in a few years, or days, or hours; then, however strong or robust in constitution, his being shall terminate for ever. But if He has willed that he shall continue for ever; then, however fragile his constitution, he will run on through ages without end. Now, here I have the will of God on this question, stated by One who knew it thoroughly, and in language too unambiguous to misunderstand. "*This is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, MAY HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.*"

Secondly: That they should *recover everything that was lost* through Him. What do men lose here? Their virtue, their freedom, their rights. Christ here says, that it is the will of His Father that He should "*raise it up at the last day,*"† whatever it be. They lose more. They leave the bodies through which they received their impressions and wrought out their character to

* See Germ, p. 165.

† Ibid. p. 166.

moulder in the dust. Christ says, in relation to every man who sees Him, that it is the will of His Father that He should "*raise him up at the last day.*" He will have a "restitution of all things."

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. XXVI.

THE DIVINE WILL.

"The Father's Will."—vi. 39.

I.—HERE IS AN EXPRESSED OBJECT OF THE DIVINE WILL.

What is it?

That nothing of all that has been entrusted to Christ shall be lost. It is not His will that "one of the least of the little ones" shall perish. Destruction seems repugnant to the Divine mind. Matter seems indestructible; since the beginning of the world not an atom has been lost.

II.—HERE IS A GLORIOUS DELEGATE OF THE DIVINE WILL.

Who is He? Christ.

(1.) He is the Father's *Messenger*. (2.) He is the Father's *Steward*. "All which He hath given Me." Something has been entrusted to Him. What? "Power over all flesh" has been given to Him. Universal authority has been given to Him. "All power is given Me in heaven, and in earth." All who believe in Him as their Saviour are given Him. "All that Thou hast given Me I have kept." All truth has been given to Him. "I have given unto them the word which Thou gavest Me."

III.—HERE IS AN ULTIMATE REALIZATION OF THE DIVINE WILL.

Nothing that has been entrusted to Him shall be lost, but shall be raised up again at the last day. Christ will take care of everything that has been entrusted to Him, preserve all intact, and render up all at last to the great God. (1.) Not a soul entrusted to His care *will be lost*. (2.) Every soul entrusted to His care will be *exalted* in the last day. In this last day *God's* will concerning the redemption of the world will be fully realized.

No. XXVII.

GOD'S UNALTERABLE DECREE IN RELATION TO MAN.

"And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."—vi. 40.

Much has been said and written about God's decrees. The dogmatism of narrow-minded theologians concerning them has made them something terrible to the common mind. But what

are His decrees but the resolves of Infinite love? The text leads us to make two remarks concerning them.

I.—GOD DECREES THE WELL-BEING OF MANKIND.

It is His "*will*" that we should have "*everlasting life*." What does this mean? Is it merely an existence without an end? All, perhaps, will have that. But it means an *endless existence* in the *absence* of all *evil* and in *possession* of all *good*—physical, intellectual, social, religious.

II.—GOD DECREES A SETTLED CONDITION FOR MAN'S WELL-BEING.

The condition is *faith in Christ*. "*This is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him,*" &c. In the days of His flesh thousands *saw* Him who did not believe on Him; and now multitudes intellectually see Him who do not believe on Him. Faith in Him is God's condition. Faith in Him—

First: As the Divine Redeemer. One sent of God for the work of effecting the spiritual restoration of the world. Faith in Him—

Secondly: As the all-sufficient Redeemer;—"One that is mighty to save." Faith in Him—

Thirdly: As the only Redeemer. "There is no other name given under heaven whereby ye may be saved." God's decree then is that man's well-being should be obtained through faith in Christ. God does not desire the misery of any man, but the happiness of all; and as He has decreed that light shall come to the earth through the sun, He has decreed that true happiness shall come to humanity through faith in Christ.

No. XXVIII.

THE LAST DAY.

"The last day."—vi. 40.

There is the last day in everything in this life.

I.—THERE IS THE "LAST DAY" IN BUSINESS.

The last day comes to the tradesman in his shop, to the merchant on the Exchange, to the lawyer in his office, to the clerk at his desk, &c. &c.

II.—THERE IS THE "LAST DAY" IN CHURCH.

The last sermon heard, the last hymn sung, the last service attended, and the pew left for ever.

III.—THERE IS THE "LAST DAY" IN LIFE.

The whole of life dwindled down to one day in a certain year, month, week. The last refreshment taken, the last word spoken, the last breath drawn. The "*last day*."

No. XXXIX.

THE TENDENCY OF UNBELIEF.

"The Jews then murmured at Him, because He said, I am the bread which came down from heaven," &c.—vi. 41—47.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 41.—*"The Jews then murmured at (R. V. CONCERNING) Him."* "A new section of the affair, occasioned by the Jews taking decisive offence at the preceding discourse. The *οὖν* is again very definitive. The verb *γογγύζω*, of itself, denotes neither, on the one hand, a whispering, nor, on the other, a grumbling or fault-finding; but the murmuring is here the expression of fault-finding, and is made by the context ('among yourselves') and by the antagonism ('at Him') synonymous with it."—*Lange*. "*Because He said, I am the bread which came down from (R. V. OUT OF) heaven.*" His claim here to have come down from heaven roused their rebellious spirits, His claim to be very God was insufferable to them.

Ver. 42.—*"And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" "Is not this Jesus,"*—who thus arrogates Divinity, represents Himself as coming down from heaven,—*"the son of Joseph,"* of Nazareth, a poor carpenter? What does He mean? *"How is it then that He saith, I came down from (R. V. HOW DOETH HE NOW SAY I CAME DOWN OUT OF) heaven?"* His claim is false and impious.

Vers. 43, 44.—*"Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at (R. V. IN) the last day."* "*Ἑλκύειν* denotes all sorts of drawing, from violence to persuasion or invitation. But persons can be drawn only according to the laws of personal life. . . . Hence this is not to be taken in a high predestinarian sense." "The point of our Saviour's reply is, that all dispute about His person is fruitless, until the internal sense of want is experienced. In what this consists we are told in the forty-fifth and forty-sixth verses." *Luther*:—"You wish

to subject Me to measure and square, and judge My word by your reason; but I say to you, that is not the right way and path. You will not come to Him till the Father opens to you His great mercy, and Himself teaches you that from His Fatherly love He sent Christ into the world. [For] the drawing is not as a hangman draws a thief to the gallows, but it is a friendly alluring and drawing to Himself." *Tholuck*:—"Jesus therefore virtually says, Except the Divine works which the Father hath empowered Me to do, and the doctrines He has ordered Me to preach, induce men to believe in Me as a Teacher, commissioned by God to instruct them in heavenly truths, they cannot in any other way or by any other arguments do so."

Ver. 45.—*"It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God."* The particular reference is here to Isaiah liv. 13; but the sense of the statement runs through the prophets. (See Isaiah xi.; Jeremiah xxxi. 33; Joel iii. 1.) It points to the gospel dispensation, when "*all*" are to be taught of God. *"Every man (R. V. ONE) therefore that hath heard (R. V. OF THE FATHER), and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me."* Here is a universal truth, every one that is in sympathy with the Father will come to the Son. All that pay attention to what the Father teaches, will not fail to be drawn with a loving interest to His Son. Like attracts like.

Ver. 46.—*"Not that any man hath seen the Father, save He which is of (R. V. FROM) God, He hath seen the Father."* Some suppose that Christ in this verse contrasts His seeing God with that of Moses; others, that He means the inward manifestation of God supersedes the historical Christ; others, that He indicates a difference in kind and degree of revelation; others, that He indicates His transcendent nature in relation to the

Father. He only "hath seen the Father." Not Moses, not even the angels, have seen the Absolute Divinity.

Ver. 47.—"*Verily, verily, I say unto you.*" A species of oath. "*Believeth on Me.*" (R. V. OMITTS ON ME.) The

Divine redeeming Messenger from heaven. "*Hath everlasting* (R. V. ETERNAL) *life.*" "*Hath*"—not shall have. Genuine faith in Christ puts man now and here in possession of everlasting goodness and blessedness.

HOMILETICS.

In these verses there are several subjects which arrest attention and are worthy of serious meditation.

I.—THE TENDENCY OF UNBELIEF.

"*The Jews then murmured at Him, because He said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that He saith, I came down from heaven?*"

"*The Jews then murmured*"—murmured in their own hearts, murmured to one another, and in all against Christ. Why did they murmur? Because of their reluctance to identify the Divine with the common. How could One whom they knew was from Nazareth be from heaven, One whose father and mother they knew as poor people be the Son of God? Had they not known the obscure scene of His nativity and the social lowliness of His parents, then,—had He performed such wonders as they witnessed, proclaimed such doctrines as they had heard,—they might have been disposed to have identified Him with the Divine. This feeling, which the Jews here displayed, is the tendency of unbelief, a tendency—

First: *Fearfully prevalent.* You may see it in the conduct of man in relation to the phenomena of *material nature*. Men may connect the idea of God with some majestic tree, but not with the daisy; with the lion, but not with the insect; with the thunder-storm, but not with the whispering zephyr. You may see it in the conduct of men in relation to their *contemporaries*. They are quick to catch what they consider glimpses of Divinity in the great of the land—in the high titled ecclesiastics, the bedizened nobles, the renowned orators and authors; but not a ray of the Divine can they see in humble life—in the devotion of parents, the innocent love of children, the streams of genuine sympathy that run through every sphere. Who does not recognize this tendency? Who does not feel it? It is a tendency—

Secondly: *Philosophically absurd.* Right reason assures us that Divinity, if anywhere, must be everywhere—as truly in the atom as in the globe, in the blade as in the forest, in the calm as in the tempest, in the fly as in the eagle; as truly with the poorest men as with the greatest, and that morally it flashes out in the life

of the godly pauper more than in all the magnificent doings of mere worldly dignitaries. This tendency is—

Thirdly: *Morally reprehensible*. It is the duty of every man to see God everywhere, hear His voice in every sound, and behold His presence in every form, His energy in every motion. "Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord." "The earth is His temple." "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." This tendency is—

Fourthly: *Spiritually pernicious*. It lessens our appreciation of nature, checks the growth of the sentiment in the heart of what is due to all men, shuts out God from the largest sphere of our activity, and reduces life to that of practical atheism. Let us seek to crush this tendency in our own hearts by a devout cultivation of the sense of God's universal presence.

Another subject which we find in these verses demanding our attention is—

II.—THE DIVINITY OF CHRISTIANITY.

"Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, *Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*" In these verses you have God doing two things—

First: Sending His Son to man. "*The Father which hath sent Me.*" Christ was "*sent*," not by any secondary authorities. He came forth as a Messenger of the Eternal, came as the Result, the Revelation, and the Minister of God's free and boundless love to the world. He was sent, not contrary to His own will. He came as no reluctant Messenger. His heart was in full sympathy with that of the Eternal Father. His "*delight was in the law of the Lord.*" His "*meat and His drink*" was to do the Divine will. He was "*sent*," and He demonstrated the Divinity of His commission. "No man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with Him," so said Nicodemus, and so says impartial and enlightened reason through all ages.

In these verses you have God doing another thing—

Secondly: Bringing man to His Son. "*No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him.*" Man's well-being consists in being brought into a faithful, loving fellowship with Christ. Though Christ came, men stood aloof from Him. "He came to His own, and His own received Him not." Hence the Infinite Father draws men to Him. What meaneth this?

(1.) *Coercion* is not meant here. The great Creator treats all creatures according to the natures He has given them. He has endowed man with freedom, and He never has and never will infringe the principles of his liberty. He does not draw the soul

as the constable draws the prisoner into his cell, but as a loving mother draws her children to her arms.

(2.) *Partiality* is not meant here. It does not mean that He influences some to the exclusion of others. He shows no favouritism. All souls are His.

(3.) *Miracle* is not meant here. He draws souls by means and agencies in harmony with the laws of their nature, by the influences of events, material and spiritual, by the suggestions of thought, the workings of conscience, and the ministry of the gospel.

(4.) *Superfluity* is not meant here. This work is not unnecessary work. So destitute of sympathy with Christ is unregenerate humanity, and so potent and active are the influences of the flesh, the world, and the devil in drawing souls away from the Divine, that His drawing is indispensable. The human soul in this life is subject to two drawings—the one is *away from* Christ, the other is *to* Christ. The latter is Divine.

Another subject which we find in these verses demanding our attention is—

III. THE PRE-EMINENCE OF JESUS.

"It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save He which is of God, He hath seen the Father."

These verses teach two things illustrating the pre-eminence of Christ—

First: That all souls truly influenced by the Divine, will come to Him. "*Every man,*" etc. Christ gets the true men of every age, gets them as His disciples, His loyal servants, His devoted friends. Who are those that keep aloof from Him? Not the best authors, statesmen, kings, citizens, fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, children, &c. No; but the worst. The best come to Christ. And they will all come one day. "*It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God.*" "All men shall be drawn to Him, all nations shall call Him blessed."

Another thing taught in these verses concerning the pre-eminence of Christ is—

Secondly: That no one but Christ has any absolute knowledge of the Father. "*Not that any man hath seen the Father, save He which is of God, He hath seen the Father.*" God is the Mystery to all creatures, and will continue to be so for ever, after the study of millenniums. The most capacious intellect and the most diligent and successful student in the universe is ever ready to exclaim, "Who by searching can find out God?"

We cannot find Thee out, Lord,
For infinite Thou art,

Thy wondrous works and word, Lord,
 Reveal Thee but in part.
 The drops that swell the ocean,
 The sands that girt the shore,
 To measure Thy duration
 Their numbers have no power.
 Thy nature is the mystery
 In which all thoughts are lost,
 Archangels wonder at Thee
 Through heaven's unnumbered host ;
 Unbounded is Thine essence,
 All space is full of Thee,
 And 'tis Thy Blessed presence
 That suns immensity.

But Christ understands Him, and He alone. He was in the bosom of the Father. He knows Him, knows His nature, fathoms His thoughts, and comprehends His infinite purposes. He then is the Teacher of mankind, the Image of the Invisible God.

There is one more subject here demanding our attention, and that is—

IV. THE WELL-BEING OF HUMANITY.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life.” Observe—

First : The nature of man's well-being. *“Everlasting life.”* Life is esteemed by all as the transcendent blessing. “All that a man hath will he give in exchange for his life.” But this transcendent blessing may, and often does, become an intolerable curse ; hence suicides. Aye, *“everlasting life,”*—taking life in the sense of existence,—may be an everlasting curse. But life here means happiness, well-being. It means everlasting well-being, living for ever in virtue, liberty, intelligence, dignity, progress.

Secondly : The condition of man's well-being. *“He that believeth on Me.”* *Me* ; not what men say about *Me* ; not My doctrines and history, but Myself.*

Conclusion. From this subject two things may be inferred—

First : That the true religion of man is essentially connected with the existence of Christ. There may be other intelligent creatures in the universe whose genuine religion has no connection with Jesus of Nazareth. In their case, it may be, that supreme sympathy with the Infinitely Good which was planted in their nature at first, has been nourished and developed under the influences of nature. This would have been the religion of man, had he not fallen ; but now, all that is true in the religion of humanity has a vital relation to the character of Jesus Christ. He is its Example, Standard, and Inspiration.

Secondly : That the true religion of man is generated in the soul

* This subject has come under our attention in previous portions of this Gospel.

by the special agency of God. He sent Christ to man, and brings man to Christ for this purpose. The religion of unfallen intelligences requires no such special agency. In them it is but the development of their spiritual nature. Not so with man. By sin, he has quenched within him the true religion; and God's special effort is required to resuscitate, strengthen, and mature it. Hence in the Holy Scripture it is spoken of as a spiritual regeneration, resurrection, creation. He creates them "anew in Christ Jesus unto good works."

Thus, in fact, the true religion of man is the life of Christ in the soul, the life produced by the special agency of the Eternal Father. They are one with Christ,

"And in their souls His image bear,
Rejoicing in the likeness. As the sun
Doth spread his radiance through the fields of air,
And kindle in revolving stars his blaze,
He pours upon their hearts the splendour of His rays."
Thomas C. Upham.

No. XL.

CHRIST AS A DIVINE GIFT TO THE WORLD.

"I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead," &c.—vi. 48—58.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 48.—*"I am that (R. V. THE) bread of life."* This refers back to the previous announcement (ver. 35). *"That"* bread which came down from heaven, and which is necessary to the spiritual life of the world.

Vers. 49, 50.—*"Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead (R. V. THEY DIED). This is the bread which cometh down from (R. V. OUT OF) heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die."* Here is a contrast between the life which the manna of Moses sustained and the spiritual life which is nourished by Christ, the living bread. All who ate the manna in the wilderness are dead centuries ago. None who partake of this true bread have or will ever die.

Ver. 51.—*"I am the living bread which came down from (R. V. OUT OF) heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever."* Christ in this discourse repeats the same idea in different connections or phrases, in order to increase its force and intensify its emphasis. *"Living bread;"* what

an expression! Bread living! Not only does it give life, but it is life. *"And (R. V. YEA AND) the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."* "The word '*flesh*' here must be taken as standing for Himself. It was often used in Scripture, sometimes without the word blood, to represent the whole man. What Christ means to say, therefore, is this,—'The bread that I give is Myself.' The flesh and blood of Christ are the historical Christ."—Lange.

Ver. 52.—*"The Jews therefore strove among themselves (R. V. ONE WITH ANOTHER), saying, How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?"* The Jews were scandalized that a mere man should put forth such pretensions. *"How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?"* The language to them seemed to be to the last degree absurd, and if it had a meaning, it meant blasphemy.

Ver. 53.—*"Then Jesus said (R. V. THEREFORE) unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood,*

ye have no life in you" (R. V. YOURSELVES). "The Divine Teacher uses these violent figures and bold paradoxes powerfully to excite their attention, and to implant a seed of truth which might afterwards germinate. At present, He does not care to retain among His disciples such mercenary and earthly-minded followers. Hence, instead of softening or explaining expressions so offensive to their feelings and prejudices, He indulges in others still more strange and paradoxical. He thus tested the faith of His disciples, sifted His hearers, the good from the bad, and inculcated lessons of truth of inestimable value to all ages."

Vers. 54, 55, 56.—"*Whoso* (R. V. HE THAT) *eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth* (R. V. ABIDETH) *in Me, and I in him.*" Now, the all-important question which one has to determine here is, What does our Saviour mean by "*flesh and blood*?" He does not mean, of course, literally the materials out of which His body was built up, nor does He mean anything like what Papists hold, that the bread and the wine employed at the Lord's Supper become, after the invocation of the priests, transmuted into the flesh and blood of Christ. He means, I imagine, simply this—Myself, my life. "*Flesh and blood*" are employed in a large variety of passages in the Bible to represent the life of man. (See Psalm xiv. 4; lxxv. 2; Isaiah xl. 5, 6; Jeremiah xii. 12; Luke iii. 6.) Again, we have such expressions as these, "*Flesh and blood hath not revealed it*" (Matt. xvi. 17);

"*They twain shall be one flesh*" (Matt. xix. 5, 6); "*No flesh shall glory*" (1 Cor. i. 29); "*I conferred not with flesh and blood*" (Gal. i. 16); "*The children are partakers of flesh and blood*" (Heb. ii. 14); "*Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom*" (1 Cor. xv. 50). In all these passages both the words "*flesh and blood*," sometimes separately and sometimes together, stand for human life. Hence, to ascertain the real meaning the words have in His language, is to ascertain what *His life* really was. What was the animating, ruling principle of His *being*, that which marked Him off from all other men, that in fact made Him Christ? There is but one answer to this, namely, *Self-sacrificing love*. The meaning therefore I take to be this, that unless you take into yourself *My life*,—My self-sacrificing love,—you cannot live.

Ver. 57.—"*As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by* (R. V. BECAUSE OF) *the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he* (R. V. HE ALSO) *shall live by* (R. V. BECAUSE OF) *Me.*" Christ here asserts, not only that the living Father had sent Him, but that the life of the Father was in Him; that is, the same spiritual life—the life of disinterested love that was in the Father—was in Him, and that that life was the privilege of all who would participate of His Spirit. The real life of a moral intelligence is self-sacrificing love, that life is the life of God, the life of Christ, and, through Christ, is the life of mankind.

Ver. 58.—"*This is that bread which came down from* (R. V. OUT OF) *heaven: not as your* (R. V. THE) *fathers did eat manna, and are dead* (R. V. DID EAT AND DIED): *he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.*" A repetition, this, of former utterances.

HOMILETICS.

These words present to us *Christ as a Divine gift to the world*, and they lead us to look upon Christ in three aspects.

I.—AS A SPECIAL GIFT FROM THE FATHER.

Christ here speaks of Himself as "*the Living Bread which came down from heaven*," as sent by the living Father. He gives His

hearers to understand that He was the gift of God to the world, and this He taught elsewhere in various places and forms of expression. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." But are not all things the gifts of God—life, the universe, and every element that ministers to the well-being of sentient creatures? Yes; "every good and perfect gift cometh down from above." But Christ is a *special* Gift.

First: He is the greatest Personality in the universe. The whole material system is not to be compared in value to that of one intelligent, free, responsible, undying personality. The poorest child of man is greater than stars and systems. But some personalities are greater than others. An angel may be greater than a man. Christ is greater, infinitely greater than all. "He is the image of the invisible God, in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." The Father, in giving Him, gave a greater treasure than if He had given all He had beside.

Secondly: He is the dearest Personality to God in the universe. He is His "beloved Son in whom He is well pleased," the special object, channel, and minister of His love. What a gift is this! A gift the transcendent value of which no created intellect through eternal ages will ever be able fully to appreciate. Another aspect in which the passage leads us to look at Christ is—

II.—AS A FREE GIFT OF SELF.

Christ was not given as a slave, either without His will or against His will; but in the gift of the Father He gives Himself. "*The bread that I will give is My flesh, for the life of the world.*" Between the will of His father and Himself, there was a vital and inviolable harmony. The one gift is the free gift of both. "I lay down My life for the sheep, no man taketh it from Me" (John x. 15—18). "He gave Himself a Ransom for all" (1 Tim. ii. 6). "Who loved me, and gave Himself for me," says Paul. Christ is at once the *Gift*, and the *Giver* of the gift. This may transcend our reason, but it shocks it not. Children often willingly and lovingly give themselves to a work to which their parents devote them. The passage presents to us Christ in yet another aspect—

III.—AS AN INDISPENSABLE GIFT FOR MEN.

It is "*the Bread of life.*"

First: There is no spiritual life without it. "*Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.*" * The life of Christ, as we have seen, was that of free, disinterested, self-sacrificing love. Unless man takes this into him, he has no life. Love is the only true spiritual life. The loss of this is man's

* See Germ, p. 175.

damnation, its restoration is man's salvation. Christ came to restore it.

Secondly: This spiritual life is identical with that of God and Christ. "*He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood,* dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me.*" In the moral universe there is but one true life, and that is the life of love. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." The living Father is its perennial fountain. The Blessed Son incarnated it, and supplies it to all who are willing to receive it. *Love is the bread of life.*

Thirdly: This spiritual life includes man's well-being for ever. Mark the words: "*A man may eat thereof, and not die. If a man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, shall live for ever, and I will raise him up for ever.*" Yes; in this our eternal well-being consists.

CONCLUSION. Oh, ye hungry, starving souls, "Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." The bread of the soul, believe me, is not animal pleasure, not intellectual knowledge, not gold, not power, not fame. It is love—love as flowing from the heart of the Living Father, as embodied in the life and inculcated in the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. He who lives in Christ, to use the language of another, stands at the focus of rejuvenation.

"Why, man, pursue thy weary calling,
And wring thy hard life from the sky,
While happiness unseen is falling
Down from God's bosom silently?"

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. XXIX.

SPIRITUAL CANNIBALISM.

"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."—vi. 53.

Taking the expression flesh and blood as representing life, the subject here is participation in the life of Christ. Two remarks may give a meaning to this much misunderstood and misinterpreted expression.

I.—THAT IT IS POSSIBLE FOR ONE MAN TO PARTICIPATE IN THE LIFE OF ANOTHER.

What is the real life of a man? Not his corporeal organization,

* See Germ, p. 176.

but the *spirit* that animates and controls him—his *governing disposition*. Throughout all society men are spiritually living on one another. *Spiritual cannibalism* is universal. Every man is under the control of some disposition. It may be vanity, greed, ambition. Whatever it be, it is his life. On the productions of this life others feed and fatten. Notice—

II.—THAT IT IS NECESSARY FOR EVERY MAN TO PARTICIPATE IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

What was the life of Christ,—His governing disposition, that which marked Him off from all other men? *Self-sacrificing* love for mankind. This was in fact His flesh and blood—His very life. Had He not had this He would not have been Christ. Now this spirit, this life, is the food essential to human souls. "*Except ye eat the flesh.*" It fulfils the twofold function of food.

First: It satisfies. Food allays the cravings of appetite, &c. No act that a man can perform can yield soul-satisfaction unless inspired by this self-sacrificing love. Conscience will not pronounce "well done" to any other, though it may awaken the hosannas of the crowd. If I want soul-satisfaction I must drink in the spirit, the self-sacrificing love of Christ.

Secondly: It strengthens. The other function of food is to strengthen. Food invigorates the frame, recuperates lost energy, and generates new force. It is only as a man gets within him this self-sacrificing love that he gets true moral force—force to endure magnanimously—and to battle invincibly. These thoughts show that there is no difficulty in reaching the practical meaning of these wonderful words. The words have no reference to the Lord's Supper or to any institution. Men of superstitious feeling and superficial thought, have in all ages expended many a valuable hour on discussions on transubstantiation, consubstantiation, and other miserable superstitions in connection with these words. But they have nothing to do with such fancies. The idea is, that unless a man takes into him the moral Spirit of Christ which is His life—His "*flesh and blood*"—he himself can neither grow or live.

No. XXX.

THE UNIQUENESS OF CHRIST'S BLOOD, OR HIS SACRIFICED LIFE.

"Whoso drinketh My blood hath eternal life."—vi. 54.

The expression "*Blood of Christ*," is used by millions who have no accurate idea concerning its import. Blood is life; and the essential idea is *Christ's self-sacrificed life*. The expression is frequently used in the New Testament (see Col. i. 20; 1 John

i. 7; Rev. v. 9; vii. 14; xii. 11; Eph. ii. 13; Acts xx. 28). Two general remarks are suggested.

I.—THAT IT IS SOMETHING SUBLIMELY UNIQUE IN ITS NATURE.

Things are said of it here that could not possibly be said with propriety of the blood of any other man, in any age or time, who has sacrificed his life. Millions of men have been sacrificed, they have lost their life, but not in the way in which Christ was sacrificed. Some have been sacrificed by *assassination*, some by *war*, some by *capital punishment*, some by *accident*; most against their will, although some voluntarily, either by suicide or superstitious fanaticism. But in the case of Christ's sacrificed life there was nothing like this. Two facts especially marked off His sacrificed life from that of any other sacrificed life.

First: It was in accordance with the eternal plan of God. He was the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." There was nothing accidental about it, nothing out of keeping with the eternal order of things.

Secondly: It was voluntary in the sense in which no other man's death was voluntary. Amongst the millions of men who have died *most freely*, not one has felt that he need not die at all if he choose, that he could continue here for ever. But this Christ felt. There was no law in heaven or earth to force Him to the fate. "I have power to lay down My life, and power to take it up again."

Thirdly: It was absolutely free from all imperfection. Not one of all the teeming myriads who have departed this life has been entirely free from sin. All have had on them, to a greater or lesser extent, the common stain. But Christ was immaculate. His greatest enemies could not convince Him of sin; Pilate and all His judges could find no fault with Him. He was "holy, harmless, and separate from sinners." Another remark suggested concerning the Blood of Christ is—

II.—THAT IT IS SOMETHING SUBLIMELY UNIQUE IN ITS EFFECTS.

Results are ascribed to this blood which could not with any propriety, or the slightest approach to truth, be ascribed to the blood of any other man.

First: These effects are variously represented. His blood is sometimes represented as *reconciliation*. His sacrificed life was *the atonement*. It is represented as *purification*. "It cleanseth from all sin," and through it men are made white. "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us," &c. It is represented as an *essential element of soul-life*. "*Whoso drinketh My blood hath eternal life:*" something that has not only to be applied to the soul, but taken into it. It is represented as a *ransom*. "Redeemed us to God by His blood,"

“purchased by His blood.” It is the power to deliver from the guilt and dominion of sin. It is represented as a *conquering force*. “Overcame by the blood of the Lamb.” Of whose blood have these results ever been predicated or can ever be?

Secondly: These effects are universal in their influence. His blood “cleanseth from all sin,” it makes the great “multitudes that no man can number” “white.” How extensive has been its beneficent influence on humanity already! But its present area of influence, as compared with its future, is less than a little lake to the ocean.

Thirdly: These effects are eternal in their blessings. “*Whoso drinketh My blood hath eternal life.*”

“Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed Church of God
Be saved, to sin no more.”

CONCLUSION. The subject—

First: Serves to explain both the essence of the Gospel and the essence of personal holiness. Christ’s sacrificed life *is the Gospel*, and hence the very effects that are ascribed to His blood are also ascribed to the Gospel, to the *truth* of the Gospel, to the *grace* of the Gospel, to the *word* of the Gospel: all these are said to cleanse, to redeem, to conquer, to make white, &c. Not only does it serve to explain the essence of the Gospel, but the essence of *personal holiness*. That principle of love which led Christ to sacrifice His life, must be appropriated by us as a vital ruling element if we would be holy. His sacrifice upon the cross will be worthless to us unless we sacrifice ourselves in love, hence we must become “conformable unto His death.” The subject—

Secondly: Serves to correct the mischievous way in which the Blood of Christ is popularly represented. Men talk of Christ’s Blood as if it was the crimson fluid that coursed through His veins that saves, washes, cleanses, &c., or at any rate that it was His blood which qualified Him to be a Saviour. It was not His Blood. The Blood was nothing, only as it expressed His self-sacrificing love. Supposing that the criminal law of Rome at the time in which Christ lived had required that capital offenders should be put to death by hanging or strangling, or suffocating, or by taking poison like Socrates. Had Christ been sacrificed in any of these ways, would the power of His self-sacrifice to save humanity be one whit the less? Not so. It was His self-sacrificing love, not the form of His mortal agonies, that made Him the Saviour of the world.

No. XLI.

GOSPEL REVELATION.

“These things said He in the synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum,” &c.—
vi. 59—65.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 59.—
“*These things said He in the synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum.*” The discourse recorded in the preceding verses was delivered in all probability on the Sabbath-day. The congregation was now broken or breaking up, and the incidents related in these last verses of the chapter occurred perhaps elsewhere and in private. The synagogue here perhaps was the building erected by the grateful centurion as an expression of his love for the Jewish nation.

Ver. 60.—“*Many therefore of His disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?*” The “disciples” here do not mean exclusively the twelve, but include those who generally attended His ministry in Capernaum. “*Hard saying.*” They regarded the words of our Saviour referring to the eating of His body and the drinking of His blood *literally*, and they could not understand them. “*Who can hear it?*” The thing is past comprehension.

Ver. 61.—“*When (R. V. BUT) Jesus knew (R. V. KNOWING) in Himself that His disciples murmured at it (R. V. THIS), He said unto them, Doth this offend you?*” (R. V. CAUSE YOU TO STUMBLE.) σκανδαλίζει, σκάνδαλον. “A snare laid for an enemy. In New Testament a stumbling-block, a scandal.”—Liddell and Scott.

Ver. 62.—“*What and if ye shall see (R. V. THEN IF YE SHOULD BEHOLD) the Son of man ascend (R. V. ASCENDING) up where He was before?*” If ye are stumbled at what I have said, how will ye bear what I now say? Not that His ascension itself would stumble them more than His death; but that after recoiling from the mention of the one, they would not be in a state of mind to take in the other.

Ver. 63.—“*It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing:*

the words that I speak (R. V. HAVE SPOKEN) unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (R. V. ARE SPIRIT AND ARE LIFE). This verse is the key to unlock the meaning of the whole preceding discourse. He explains His seemingly violent expressions by telling them that they must understand Him figuratively, not literally; and that what was spiritual in His religion quickened men, and gave them life, not the literal flesh, which availed nothing to such an end. “*The words*”—“He proceeds to declare what He means by spirit and by life. It was His instructions, doctrines, truths, that would summon into action and progress man’s spiritual life, and lead him onward to eternal blessedness.”—*Livermore.*

Ver. 64.—“*But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who (R. V. IT WAS THAT) should betray Him.*” Jesus meant to say, It does not matter to some of you in what sense I speak, for ye will not believe Me. “*Jesus knew from the beginning.*” He read them through and through, His omniscience is elsewhere asserted (Rev. ii. 23; John ii. 24; Matt. ix. 4; xii. 25; Luke v. 22; vi. 8; ix. 47). He knew what Judas would do; his conduct did not take Him by surprise.

Ver. 65.—“*And He said, Therefore (R. V. FOR THIS CAUSE HAVE I) said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto Him of My (R. V. THE) Father.*” “To be given of the Father,” says *Whitby*, “is to be convinced by the miracles which God hath wrought by Him; to testify the truth of His mission, that He was the Messiah; and to be willing on these testimonies to own Him as such, laying aside all those unreasonable prejudices and carnal affections which obstructed their coming to Him.”

HOMILETICS.

The passage now under notice may be regarded as presenting to us *Gospel Revelation* in three aspects.

I.—AS SENSUOUSLY INTERPRETED.

These hearers of Christ gave a sensuous interpretation of His words concerning the eating of His flesh and the drinking of His blood. They considered that He meant a species of cannibalism. They did not penetrate into the spiritual meaning of the figure, and reach the grand principle of self-sacrificing love.

This sensuous interpretation—

First: Involved them in difficulty. “*This is a hard saying; who can hear it?*” As if they had said, It is beyond belief, it is an insult to our understanding. So in truth His language is, if literally interpreted. It is the sensuous or literal interpretation of Scripture that always makes it a “*hard saying*” to men. The literal interpretation of the metaphorical representations of God, as a Being *possessing human passions*, is a “*hard saying*.” The literal interpretation of the metaphorical representations of the *millennium*, in which Christ is represented as coming in person to reign on the earth, and to accomplish by miracles what had not been done by moral ministries, is a “*hard saying*.” The literal interpretation of the metaphorical *resurrection* of the race, in which every son of Adam is spoken of as coming forth from his grave in exactly the same body he had previous to his death, is also a “*hard saying*.” The literal interpretation of the metaphorical representation of *hell*, in which the wicked are represented as burning in material flames for ever, is a “*hard saying*.” In truth, no man who, like these hearers of Christ, gives a *literal* or sensuous interpretation of a book like the Bible, which is *pre-eminently metaphorical*, can fail to feel it a “*hard saying*.”

This sensuous interpretation—

Secondly: Subjected them to unbelief. “*Who can hear it?*” Who can accept it, who can give it credence? Yes, who? To believe intelligently in the *literal* representations of the Bible is an utter impossibility. No class of men do more, perhaps, to promote infidelity amongst the people, than those writers and preachers who are proclaiming and urging sensuous interpretations of a highly figurative Book. I have sat in churches and chapels, and have heard such gross and material views of God, Christ, heaven, hell, set forth, as have led me to feel not only that they were a “*hard saying*,” I could not “*hear*” them, but that they were an outrage on reason, a calumny on the Book, and a libel on the Infinite.

This sensuous interpretation—

Thirdly: Was offensive to Christ. “*When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples murmured at it, He said unto them, Doth this*

offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?" "Doth this offend you?" It need not; it only shows the carnality of your minds in putting a gross interpretation on My words. What makes it hard for you to understand, is the wrong in your own hearts, not the absurdity of My words. You are prejudiced, you are sensual, you "judge after the flesh," you do not understand Me although I am with you. How will you understand Me when I am gone? "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up?" God deliver us from carnalizing the Holy Gospel! This has made Popery, this makes Ritualism, this fosters Infidelity. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

The passage now under notice may be regarded as presenting to us Gospel Revelation—

II.—AS DIVINELY EXPLAINED.

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." The spiritual subject of My discourse is that which giveth life; the material form "*profiteth nothing*." The real subject of My discourse is spirit, not flesh or matter, true spiritual life, not carnal animal life. Paul expresses a similar idea when he says, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." What do "spirit" and "letter" mean here? Simply the word and the thought, the sentence and the sentiment. Christianity has letter and spirit. If it had no letter, it would be unrevealed to men, a thought shut up in the mind of God; and if it had mere letter and no spirit, it would be hollow sound, empty jargon. All essences, principles, spirits, are invisible to us; they are only revealed through letters or forms. The spirit of a nation expresses itself in its institutions; the spirit of the creation expresses itself in its phenomena; the spirit of Jesus in His wonderful biography. By letter, therefore, I understand the 'form of a thing in contradistinction to its essence; the word in contradistinction to its meaning; the institution in contradistinction to its genius. "*The flesh profiteth nothing*," says Christ. By which He means to express the general idea that the mere forms and symbols of truth are worthless, if they fail to convey the ideas intended. But the "*spirit giveth life*." As the spirit of man vitalizes every part of his flesh during his life,—makes it warm, sensitive, and active,—so the spirit of truth and love and Christ quickens the human soul.

Christ's words *have spirit in them*. They are not mere facts and theories, but spirit itself. The words of some have nothing in them; of others, mere facts; of others, cold abstractions: not so with the words of Christ: they are "*spirit*." They throb with

spirit. Christ's words are *quickening*. "It is the spirit that quickeneth." What quickening work in intellect, conscience, soul they have accomplished ere now! May we all so study the Holy Gospel that we may reach its "*spirit*," and feel its quickening energy!

The passage now under notice may be regarded as presenting to us Gospel Revelation—

III.—AS PRACTICALLY DISBELIEVED.

"*But there are some of you that believe not.*" Three remarks are suggested here.

First: Disbelievers are known to Christ from the commencement. "*For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not.*" Infidelity does not strike Him with surprise. No infidel, in any age or land, has ever appeared or will ever appear, whom He did not foreknow. His foreknowledge of their infidelity, however, interferes not with their freedom, influences not their character, and lessens not, in the slightest degree, their guilt. Infidels, Christ knows all about you!

Secondly: Disbelievers are capable of the most iniquitous conduct. Christ not only knew who would not believe, but also who amongst the unbelievers "*should betray Him.*" One of the greatest crimes ever perpetrated on the earth was the betrayal of Christ, and that betrayal was the result of unbelief. No crime is too enormous for those to perpetrate who practically reject Christianity.

Thirdly: Disbelievers maintain a moral distance from Christ. "*And He said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father.*" Observe—(1.) That to believe in Christ's spiritual teaching, is to come to Him. The man who enters with all the love of his heart and the confidence of his being into the spiritual import of Christ's teaching, will feel himself brought into conscious contact with Him. He will "*come to Him.*" (2.) That the influence of the Father is necessary to enable him to believe. "*Except it were given unto him of My Father.*" Who but the Father can incline the depraved heart to look at the "truth as it is in Jesus," and to feel its quickening and saving power? This is the Father's work with all. By the influences of nature, by the events of Providence, by the discoveries of reason, by the workings of conscience, and by the ministry of truth, the great Father is ever working to bring His sons to Christ; and because His efforts are moral, they may be resisted.

"We drive the furrow with the share of faith
Through the waste fields of life, and our own hands
Sow thick the seeds that spring to weeds or flowers.
And never strong necessity nor fate
Trammels the soul that firmly says, I will!
Else are we playthings, and 'tis Satan's mock
To preach to us repentance and belief."

No. XLII.

THE TRANSCENDENT WORTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

"From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him," &c.—vi. 66—71.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 66.—*"From that time (R. V. UPON THIS) many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him."* *"Upon this"*—that is, on account of the discourse He had just delivered, which they by their carnal interpretations made absurd and abhorrent, they withdrew from His ministry.

Ver. 67.—*"Then said Jesus (R. V. THEREFORE) unto the twelve, Will (R. V. WOULD) ye also go away?"* How many of His hearers now went away, we are not told—perhaps hundreds; and Christ, to test the twelve, turns to them and says, *Do you also wish to go away?* Some see sadness in this question, and render the words, *"Ye will not go away, will ye?"*

Ver. 68.—*"Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."* Here is warm-hearted, impetuous Peter true to his nature again. *"Eternal life"* means eternal goodness, which is eternal blessedness.

Ver. 69.—*"And we believe (R. V. HAVE BELIEVED) and are sure (R. V. KNOW) that Thou art that Christ, the Son (R. V. HOLY ONE) of the living God."* Instead of the *"Son of the living God"* it should be, the Holy One of God, the One consecrated by and for the most Holy One.

Ver. 70.—*"Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve?" (R. V. DID I NOT CHOOSE YOU THE TWELVE?)* A more definite exposition of the words of verse 67. "Not the language of reflection, but of sudden pain over the tragic result, in contrast with that joyful confession which Peter was convinced he could give in the name of all."—*Meyer*. "It probably refers, not to the tragic result, but to the moral alienation, the germ of apostasy, which from this time forth developed itself in Judas. The distribution of the

emphasis is very significant—'I' is first, then 'You,' then the 'twelve.' I, as the Holy One of God, have chosen you to the highest honours."—*Lange*. *"One of you is a devil."* The words of *Dr. Farrar* on this subject deserve quotation. "The English version is unfortunate because it does not maintain the distinction between *διάβολος*, the word here used, and *δαιμόνιον*, which it usually renders 'devil,' e. g. in 'He has a devil.' Euthymius here explains 'devil' by either 'servant of the devil' or 'conspirator,' and the latter meaning seems very probable; indeed, this very word *ἐπίβουλος* is used by the LXX to render the Hebrew Satan in 1 Kings v. 4; 1 Sam. xxix. 4. I have already noticed how much more lightly the Jews, and indeed all Orientals to this day, used the word Satan than we do; this indeed may be almost called a *modus loquendi* among them; and if Jesus spoke in Aramaic, and used the word *ܫܬܢܐ*, then the reproach is not one-tenth part so fearful as it sounds to us. Thus, the sons of Zeruiah are called a Satan to David (2 Sam. xix. 22), and Hadad is called a Satan to King Solomon (Kings xi. 23), where it is merely rendered 'adversary,' and in Matt. xvi. 23 the word is applied to Peter Himself. 'When the ungodly curseth Satan' (*i. e.* an enemy), says the Son of Sirach (xxi. 27), 'he curseth his own soul.' All this is important in many ways. Further, we may observe that *διάβολος* occurs by no means frequently in the New Testament."

Ver. 71.—*"He (R. V. NOW HE) spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon."* (R. V. ISCARIOT.) There was another Judas, the son of James; but this was the son of Simon Iscariot. *"For he it was that should betray Him."* About to betray Him. *"Being one of the twelve."* In the three lists of the apostles it is added that he was the betrayer.

HOMILETICS.

We may take these words as a whole to illustrate *the transcendent worth of Christianity*, and we remark—

I.—THAT CHRISTIANITY PROVIDES FOR THE COMPLETE WELL-BEING OF HUMAN NATURE.

"Thou hast the words of eternal life." Life here does not mean mere existence; for existence itself may be a curse, and endless existence an eternal calamity. But it means, as we have said, eternal *goodness*, or holiness, which is happiness. It means an eternal existence, not only apart from all moral and natural evil, but in inseparable connection with all natural and moral good. It involves the totality of all that man requires to consummate his bliss. It is the true *summum bonum*. Now, Christianity has the *"words of eternal life."* It has the means to *generate, sustain, develop, and perfect* in man this eternal goodness. Nothing else can do it. Science, literature, art, law, none nor all of those can effect it. Peter means to say, We want eternal life; and Thou hast it, and Thou alone. Yes, it is the want, the deep eternal want, of human nature. Now this Christianity provides for: it has *"the words of eternal life."*

First: Its *"words"* revoke the sentence of self-condemnation to eternal death. The guilty conscience when awakened dooms man to a terrible future. Christ's words revoke in man this condemnation. "There is therefore now no condemnation," &c.

Secondly: Its *"words"* remove the moral disease which insures eternal death. The Bible teaches—(1.) That men are infected with the mortal malady. And (2.) That the Gospel removes it, and implants the seeds of eternal life.

Another fact here is—

II.—THAT CHRISTIANITY RESPECTS THE FREEDOM OF HUMAN NATURE.

"Will ye also go away?" Christ uses no coercion; He does not dragoon men into His service; He treats them according to their nature: men are made to act freely, and they never can act as men only as they are free. Hence Christ says, *"Will ye?"*

First: Christ does not want our service. He can do without us. He could destroy the old creation, and create a new universe. Do not stay with Me from the idea that I want you.

Secondly: Christ will not accept forced service. (1.) Because there could be no moral virtue in such service. He requires us to serve Him because by doing so we become morally good. (2.) Because there could be no happiness in such service. He wishes

our happiness. The gloomy looks and sepulchral tones of religious serfs are an abomination to Him. Be free then.

Another fact here is—

III.—THAT CHRISTIANITY TAKES THE STRONGEST MORAL HOLD UPON HUMAN NATURE.

“*To whom can we go?*” Though free, we are bound. What are its binding forces?

First: The gratitude it inspires. Gratitude ever binds to the benefactor.

Secondly: The love it enkindles. Love always binds the heart to its object, and the more excellences the object displays the stronger the tie becomes.

Thirdly: The hope it awakens. Hope binds the heart to the object promised. Christ makes wonderful promises.

Fourthly: The congeniality it produces. Christianity suits man in every respect—heart, conscience, intellect,—all. To whom, then, can the man “*go*” who has really secured Christianity? How can he extricate himself? To whom can you go? Will you go to Rationalism,—to Romanism,—to Paganism,—to Secularism? There is nowhere else you *can* go to, if you would. Another fact here is—

IV.—THAT CHRISTIANITY REJECTS NOT THE WORSE TYPES OF HUMAN NATURE.

Christ had chosen Judas, who was a devil, and who betrayed Him. Christ gave Judas an opportunity of reaching “*eternal life*.” For three years He ministered to Judas. Judas heard His sermons, witnessed His miracles, sat at His feasts, and even had his feet washed by His hands. Observe—

First: The power of man to *misrepresent himself*. Judas for years appeared as a disciple, spoke as a disciple, prayed as a disciple; behaved in every way and appeared externally as a disciple, and yet the devil was in his heart. “*One of you is a devil*.” A bad man, like the devil, can transform himself into an angel of light. Observe—

Secondly: The power of man to *act against circumstances*. Circumstances more powerfully adapted to make a bad man good, you can scarcely imagine than those which acted upon Judas during the three past years. Notwithstanding this, he became a greater devil, became worse every day. No circumstances can make a man better or worse, irrespective of his own will.*

“Our bodies,” says Shakspeare, “are our gardens; to the which our wills are gardeners: so that if we will plant nettles, or sow lettuce; set hyssop, and weed up thyme; supply it with one gender of herbs, or distract it with many; either to have it sterile

with idleness, or manured with industry; why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills."

No. XLIII.

INFIDELITY.

(*Jesus goes up to the Feast of Tabernacles—His final departure from Galilee—Incidents in Samaria.*—LUKE ix. 51–56; JOHN vii. 2–10.)

"After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for He would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill Him," &c.—vii. 1–10.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 1.—*"After these things."* It will be observed from the harmony, that the year between the second and third passovers of our Lord is opened by John (chap. v.) and closed with this announcement; so that John has only two chapters of his narrative falling within this second year of our Lord's ministry. The other evangelists have related the chief events of this year, embracing various important miracles. There are several parables, and also the sermon on the Mount, which are not given by John. *"Jesus walked in Galilee."* He continued to prosecute His labours in Galilee for a considerable time. "In this period of Galilean itineracy," says *Dr. Lange*, "fall the charges of heresy against Jesus in Galilee, and His contests with the hostile Pharisees there (Matt. xii.); most of His parables or sermons on the sea (Matt. xiii.); His interview with the deputation from Jerusalem, and the great gathering on the mountain which followed (Matt. xv.); the last contest with Pharisean power in Galilee; the retirement of the Lord; and His transfiguration (Matt. xvi. and xvii. 21)." *"He would not walk in Jewry (R. V. JUDÆA), because the Jews sought to kill Him."* The reason why He would not go into Jewry, or Judæa, is here stated, and also in chap. v. 18.

Ver. 2.—*"Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles (R. V. THE FEAST OF THE JEWS, THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES) was at hand."* The feast of tabernacles was the last of the three annual festivals, celebrated on the 15th of the 7th month, i.e. September. It

was a celebration of the sojourn of Israel in the wilderness, when they dwelt in tents. It continued seven or eight days, and the last day became the great day of the feast.

Ver. 3.—*"His brethren therefore said unto Him, Depart hence, and go into Judæa, that Thy disciples also may see the (R. V. BEHOLD THY) works that (R. V. WHICH) Thou doest."* These brethren were undoubtedly the sons of Joseph and Mary, and their names were James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. As Jesus was the eldest, the others must have been in fresh young manhood. The reason why His brethren requested Him to depart into Judæa and to do "*works*" there, was in all probability family vanity. They wished their Brother to avail Himself of a grand national occasion to impress their countrymen with His signal greatness. They became dissatisfied with His unostentatious life in Galilee.

Ver. 4.—*"For there is no man that doeth (R. V. NO MAN DOETH) any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If Thou do (R. V. DOEST) these things, shew (R. V. MANIFEST) Thyself to the world."* Though they must be regarded as unbelievers, they seem to have had some kind of faith in His Messiahship, and they wished Him to be publicly recognized as such, by appearing at once on the open stage; and they seemed to say, If Thou hast power of working miracles, do so on a large scale: let our nation recognize the fact.

Ver. 5.—*"For neither (R. V. EVEN) did (R. V. DID NOT) His brethren believe in (R. V. ON) Him."* Although

afterwards they were numbered amongst His disciples (Acts i. 14), up to this point they had no true faith; they were infidels so far as His Messiahship was concerned.

Ver. 6.—“*Then Jesus (R. V. THEREFORE) said unto them, My time is not yet come.*” “*My time*”—there is no reason to believe that there is here any reference to His death. He had fixed upon a time when He should go to the feast, but it had not exactly arrived. The time He purposed challenging the nation and the metropolis with the fact of His Messiahship, His first public entrance into Jerusalem, was the entrance in the procession with palms. “*Your time is always ready.*” Your time is your own, you have no plan in life, you acknowledge no Divinely-regulated law; you can go where you please.

Ver. 7.—“*The world cannot hate you; but Me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the (R. V. ITS) works thereof are evil.*” The world can have no reason to hate you. Not that they were particularly sinful, or complied wickedly with the practices and passions of the world; but that they had done nothing to merit the resentment of the Jewish rulers, and call down the imprecations of the people. “*Because I testify of it.*” It was the freedom and honesty with which Jesus dealt with the bad, and probed their moral wounds, that awoke their fiery anger. His rebukes of the Scribes and Pharisees made them His unrelenting enemies till death. So always: “There is no surer way to involve one’s self in the flames of persecution, than to reprove men for their sins, and advocate with unbending rectitude the great principles of the Christian code of morals and faith.”—*Livermore.*

Ver. 8.—“*Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for My time is not yet full come*” (R. V. FULFILLED). Some omit the word “yet” as it is not found in many of the ancient MSS. All that is meant is, I go not up at present to this feast, I am not ready.

Ver. 9.—“*When He had (R. V. AND HAVING) said these words (R. V. THINGS) unto them, He abode still in Galilee.*” This verse suggests that the conversation took place some days before the departure of His brothers for the feast.

Ver. 10.—“*But when His brethren were gone up, then went He also up unto the feast, not openly (R. V. PUBLICLY), but as it were in secret.*” He went, but He did not go with them, nor with the crowd in caravans, nor perhaps until nearly the close of the feast, which lasted seven days. He went up quietly and alone. “Some think to find a contradiction here, since, saying, ‘I go not up to this feast,’ He afterwards went.” One solution makes Him to have had no intention at this time to go; but afterwards He changed His mind and went. Another lays weight upon the use of the present tense, “I go not,” which means, “I go not now, or yet;” or, as given by *Alford*, “I am not at present going up.” Another lays weight upon “this feast,” which it is said He did not in fact attend except in its last days. Still another thus defines His words—“I go not up with you, or in public with the company of pilgrims,” or “I go not up in such a way as you think or advise.” The matter, to one who considers the scope of Christ’s reply to His brethren, presents no real difficulty. They had said, “Go up to this feast, and manifest Thyself. Show Thyself to the world, and work Thy miracles in Judæa.” He replied: “My time to manifest Myself is not yet come. I go not up to this feast with such intent. At some subsequent feast I shall manifest Myself.” “As He had said, so He acted, going up to Jerusalem in a secret way, avoiding all publicity, nor arriving there till the feast was partially past. At the following pass-over He acted in substance as His brethren had advised, showing Himself to the world, and entering the holy city as a king, amid the shouts of the multitude.”—*Andrews.*

HOMILETICS.

These verses, thus explained, may be fairly taken to illustrate some phases of *infidelity*. It is said, that "*neither did His brethren believe in Him.*" They had no enlightened and genuine faith in His Divine Messiahship. The following remarks are suggested concerning infidelity—

I.—THAT IT SELDOM LACKS EVIDENCE.

These "*brethren*" must have had *ample* evidence to convince them of the Messiahship of Christ. As boys in their home at Nazareth, they must have seen every day a something that would sufficiently convince them that their Brother Jesus had elements of character transcending the human. Often, no doubt, had their mother and father pointed out to them extraordinary phases of His birth and His life; and now, having come out into public life, they had been with Him in Galilee for a considerable period. In the first verse it is said, "*After these things Jesus walked in Galilee.*" He had travelled from the borders of Tyre and Sidon to the coasts of Decapolis, everywhere preaching sublime discourses and performing wondrous deeds. *Infidels* do not need evidence, they have plenty of it. Men who do not believe in God, do not lack evidence; all nature is full of proof. Men who do not believe in the Divinity of Christianity do not need evidence. The congruity of Christ's biography with contemporaneous history, the congruity of His system with the conscience, reason, and deep-felt wants of humanity, and the immense and growing influence of His Gospel upon the sentiment, spirit, and character of mankind are certainly evidence enough. The cause of the infidelity is in the heart, rather than in the intellect, in all cases. Another remark here suggested concerning infidelity is—

II.—THAT IT IS ALWAYS VAIN.

These brethren of His, mainly from *vanity*, counsel Him to depart from Galilee, and go on a grand national occasion to Judæa, in order to make a display. "*Show Thyself to the world.*" Do not continue in such obscurity, do not be so unostentatious in Thy works, do something that will bring honour to Thee and to us. Let us be grand! Infidelity is always vain; the vainest speakers on platforms, the vainest authors in literature, the vainest members in society, are those who profess infidel opinions. They are vain of their imaginary intellectual independency, of their superior mental insight and grasp, of their superiority to current creeds. It must be so. The man who believes in nothing greater and sublimer than himself, will have both space and alimnts in his mind in which his egotism can grow to the most offensive proportions. Faith in the infinitely great and good can alone burn out the

native vanity of the corrupt heart. Infidelity is a negation. "Light empty minds," says *Leighton*, "are like bladders blown up with anything." Another remark suggested is—

III.—THAT IT IS EVER IN AGREEMENT WITH THE WORLD.

"*Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready. The world cannot hate you; but Me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.*" By the "world" is meant the prevailing ideas, spirit, and aims of corrupt humanity. And the mind of His brethren was in accord with this, but it was dead against Him. What is the spirit of the world? (1.) Materialism.—The body is everything. (2.) Practical atheism.—God is ignored. (3.) Regnant selfishness.—Self is supreme. Infidelity agrees with all this; there is no moral discrepancy, no reason for mutual antipathies and battling. Another remark suggested is—

IV.—THAT IT NEVER THWARTS THE DIVINE PURPOSE.

"*But when His brethren were gone up, then went He also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.*" Christ's plan was, not to go up to Jerusalem at the time they requested Him to go; but He went up in His own time. Their counselling influenced Him not. He pursued His own course amidst their opinions and wishes, steady and majestic as the moon through opposing clouds. So it ever is. Infidelity can never modify, check, or retard the decrees of heaven. Infidels may in countless numbers combine together to arrest the progress of truth; but He who sitteth in heaven and seeth the end from the beginning, hath said His "purposes shall stand," and He will "do all His pleasure."

CONCLUSION. Such is *infidelity* in some of its phases. It is a wretched thing. Enrich it with learning, energize it with the strongest logic, embellish it with the highest culture and genius, it is still a wretched thing. "I seem," says *Hume*, "affrighted and confounded with the solitude in which I am placed by my philosophy. When I look abroad on every side, I see dispute, contradiction, and distraction. When I turn my eye inward, I find nothing but doubt and ignorance. Where am I? or what am I? From what cause do I derive my existence? To what condition shall I return? I am confounded with questions, I begin to fancy myself in a very deplorable condition, surrounded with darkness on every side."

No. XLIV.

CHRIST'S FIRST TWO DISCOURSES AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.
I. GREAT CONTRASTS.

(*Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles. His Public Teaching.*—John vii. 11—53 ; viii. 1.)

“Then the Jews,” &c.—vii. 11—18.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 11.—“*Then the Jews* (R. V. THEREFORE) *sought Him at the feast.*” By the “*Jews*” a heretic nation is meant, as headed by the rulers. “*Where is He?*” Where is that man? They had been waiting for Him at the feast in order to kill Him; but He had not come. Crowds from all parts of the country had arrived; but He was not to be seen. All looked out for Him.

Ver. 12.—“*And there was much murmuring among the people* (R. V. MULTITUDES) *concerning Him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay;* (R. V. NOT SO) *but He deceiveth* (R. V. LEADETH) *the people.*” (R. V. MULTITUDE ASTRAY.) The people, including perhaps all classes, those who were friendly disposed and those who were hostile, all began to murmur or to whisper amongst themselves concerning Him. Some in an undertone daring to express their opinion that He was a “good man,” others declaring that “He deceived the people.”

Ver. 13.—“*Howbeit no man spake openly of Him for fear of the Jews.*” That is, none of His friends were bold enough to declare their faith in Him. All this time the mutterings and whisperings about Him go on, perhaps for three days after the feast had begun, then Christ appeared.

Ver. 14.—“*Now about* (R. V. BUT WHEN IT WAS NOW) *the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.*” “*Midst of the feast,*” that is, at the close of the third, or beginning of the fourth day, probably the Sabbath. This would seem to have been His first public teaching at Jerusalem. Where in the temple did He take His stand? Probably in the great colonnade which surrounded the space before the courts, where the Sanhedrims had their chamber, and

where there was a synagogue in which Rabbis discussed their points of doctrine and of duty.

Ver. 15.—“*And the Jews* (R. V. THE JEWS THEREFORE) *marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned in any Rabbinical school,* like Paul under Gamaliel. Christ's discourse in the temple on this occasion is not given. No doubt it was, like that Sermon on the Mount, so original, so elevated, and so true to reason and consciousness, as to strike them with astonishment; and captiously they inquire where He got His knowledge from, since He had not been technically trained.

Ver. 16.—“*Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine* (R. V. TEACHING) *is not Mine, but His that sent Me.*” Our Lord takes up their challenge and indicates the vast difference between His “doctrine” and teaching and that of the Rabbis. He virtually says, I derive My “doctrine” from no human school, nor do I proclaim it on My own authority; My Teacher is the Father. I teach under a Divine commission.

Ver. 17.—“*If any man will* (R. V. WILLETH TO) *do His will, he shall know of the doctrine* (R. V. TEACHING), *whether it be of God, or whether I speak of* (R. V. FROM) *Myself.*” Alford renders the verse, “If any man be willing to do His will, he shall know concerning the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself.” The idea is, he who has the genuine desire to do the will of God, will have in him the test of the true “doctrine.”

Ver. 18.—“*He that speaketh of* (R. V. FROM) *himself seeketh his own glory: but He that seeketh His glory that sent Him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.*” “He that

speakeeth of himself," not concerning, but from himself—*ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ*. Christ in this verse proposes another test of the truth of His claims, viz.: His freedom from the desire of self-aggrandisement, and His constant reference to the will of God in His ministry. The disinterestedness both of our Saviour and His Apostles in

the promulgation of Christianity, furnishes an unanswerable proof of its Divine origin. "*No unrighteousness is in Him.*" Or no deceit is in Him. A contrast is drawn between the true prophet and a selfish impostor. "Some suppose Jesus to have met with an interruption between this and the following verse."

HOMILETICS.

In these verses two striking *contrasts* are worthy of attention.

I.—BASE COWARDICE AND SUBLIME COURAGE.

Here is base cowardice! "*The Jews*" (*i. e.* in all probability the leaders of the Sanhedrim, and not of the people) "*sought Him at the feast, and said, Where is He? And there was much murmuring among the people concerning Him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but He deceiveth the people. Howbeit no man spake openly of Him for fear of the Jews.*" Here is cowardice. It was cowardice—(1.) For these chief men of the nation to be in cunning search for the life of one lonely man. "*Where is He?*" We want Him. What for? To listen to His doctrines? honestly to test His merits? to do honour to His person or His mission? No; but to kill Him. Here are a number of influential men banded together to crush one humble peasant! How cowardly this! It was cowardice—(2.) In the people meeting together in secrecy, and talking about Him. Why did they not speak their opinions openly, for or against? They were afraid. Sin is always cowardly, virtue alone is courageous. Sin, it is true, puts on the form of courage. Its talk is swaggering, and its attitude often defiant; but it is essentially craven-hearted. "*Thou wear a lion's hide! Doff it for shame, and hang a calf's-skin on those recreant limbs.*"—*Shakespeare*.

In contrast with this, we have the sublimest courage. "*Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.*" When the festival was at the height; when its concourse had swollen to the greatest number; when national enthusiasm for the old ceremonies and traditions blazed with the greatest intensity, this poor peasant Reformer appeared, stood up in their midst, and proclaimed doctrines that struck directly and mightily against the prejudices and spirit of the nation. He confronted public sentiment when its billows were thundering at high tide. Where in all history have you an example of courage comparable to this? Truly "*He set His face as a flint,*"—He did not "*fail, nor was He discouraged.*" The other contrast which we have in these verses is—

II.—CONVENTIONAL SCHOLARSHIP AND GENUINE INTELLIGENCE.

First: Conventional scholarship. "*And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?*" The question breathes contempt. The idea is, He has never been to our seats of learning, never studied under our Rabbis, what can He know? He is an uneducated man, and yet He forsooth presumes to teach. There has ever been much of this spirit amongst men. There are those who still hold the prejudice that a man cannot know much unless he has graduated at some University; that he is unfit to teach unless he has sat at the feet of some Gamaliel. This is a great fallacy; some of the most educated men the world has ever had, have never passed the college curriculum, and never won a university degree. This idea fills society with pedants, and often supplies our pulpits with men who have neither the kind of lore, faculty, or genius to preach the gospel of universal truth and love. In contrast with this we have—

Secondly: Genuine intelligence. "*Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself.*" Three things are worthy of remark—(1.) God is the sole Teacher of the highest doctrine. "*My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me.*" Although I have not studied under you, Rabbis, I have studied under the Infinite Father. I have got My knowledge directly from the Primal Source of all true intelligence. Yes; God is the only True Teacher of Divine truth. Brother preacher, do not content yourself with sipping at the streams of conventional teaching, go to the fountain-head. (2.) Obedience is the qualification for obtaining the highest knowledge. "*If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.*" Philosophy and experience show the truth of this. "*Pars magna bonitatis est velle fieri bonum*" ("The essence of goodness consists in teaching to be good"), says *Seneca*. And well too has *Pascal* said, that "a man must know earthly things in order to love them, but that he must love heavenly things in order to know them." (3.) Entire devotion of self to the Divine is necessary in order to communicate the highest knowledge. "*He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh His glory that sent Him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.*" It is only as a man becomes self-oblivious, and lost in the love and thoughts of God, that he can reflect the bright rays of Divine intelligence upon his fellow-men. We must allow ourselves to become mere channels through which the Divine will flow.*

* See a Homily on the True Theology, at the end of this volume.

No. XLV.

CHRIST'S FIRST TWO DISCOURSES AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

(No. 2.)—MURDER IN DESIRE.

"Did not Moses give you the law?" &c.—vii. 19—30.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 19.—*"Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth (R. V. DOETH) the law? Why go ye about (R. V. SEEK YE) to kill Me?"* They profess to believe Moses. The law of Moses prohibited murder. "Thou shalt not kill" was one of its salient sovereign edicts, hence Christ's question, *"Why go ye about to kill Me?"* Where is your consistency?

Ver. 20.—*"The people (R. V. MULTITUDE) answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about (R. V. SEEKETH) to kill Thee?"* "The people," not the rulers, but the mixed multitude. These by implication deny any desire to kill Him, and charge Him with madness for supposing it. *"Thou hast a devil."* Probably this was a proverbial expression, denoting gloominess, melancholy, brooding, suspiciousness. Perhaps they meant to say, "If Thou wert not mentally diseased, Thou wouldest not suppose that we intended to kill Thee." Mayhap these mixed multitudes had no intention to kill Him, and were ignorant of the malicious purpose of their rulers. As a rule it is not the people of the world that desire the slaughtering of men, but the rulers who have an interest in rapine and blood.

Ver. 21.—*"Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done (R. V. DID) one work, and ye all marvel."* Christ disregards the interruption, and proceeds to show that there was no reason for them, as believers in Moses, to be indignant with Him for the miracle He wrought on the Sabbath day. The "one work" at which they did "marvel" was undoubtedly the miracle He performed on the Sabbath at Bethesda, as recorded in chap. v. vers. 1—9. Why should this "one work" offend them, for He had done many works? The reason was because it was wrought on the Sabbath day.

Vers. 22, 23.—*"Moses therefore (R. V. FOR THIS CAUSE) gave unto you circumcision; (not because (R. V. THAT) it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the Sabbath day circumcise a man. If a man on the Sabbath day receive (R. V. RECEIVETH) circumcision, that the law of Moses should (R. V. MAY) not be broken; are ye angry at (R. V. WROTH WITH) Me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day?"* (R. V. OMITS DAY.) Every male child was circumcised on the eighth day after birth: and this eighth day would of course frequently fall on the Sabbath. Moses enjoined the circumcision, although the ordinance was of much higher antiquity, reaching back to the patriarchs. The argument of Jesus is this:—If it be right to perform such an external ceremony on the eighth day, as you are bound to admit it was; it certainly cannot be wrong to perform an act of benevolence upon a poor suffering man; nay, it is more justifiable, for the one is a work of mutilation, the other of restoration. The law of benevolence transcends ceremonialism and sets it at defiance. *"I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day."* Glorious work! the complete restoration of a man.

Ver. 24.—*"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment."* Righteous judgment would justify the act; but righteous judgment cannot always be reached by appearances. A right judgment requires penetration into the moral meaning or spirit of the deed: and in this case, the spirit of the act being benevolence, was right in the Divinest sense.

Ver. 25.—*"Then said some (R. V. SOME THEREFORE) of them of Jerusalem, Is not this He, whom they seek to kill?"* The Jerusalemites seemed more favourably disposed towards Christ than the "people" mentioned in ver. 23. They seem to be mere

onlookers, acquainted with the murderous designs of the rulers.

Ver. 26.—“*But* (R. V. AND), *lo, He speaketh boldly* (R. V. OPENLY), *and they say nothing unto Him. Do* (R. V. CAN IT BE THAT) *the rulers know indeed that this is the very* (R. V. OMITS VERY) *Christ?*” “They seem as an ultra party, to be solicitous even over the circumspection of the rulers, and to treat it with irony. They follow their ironical expression with their own judgment, which breathes the haughtiness of a hierarchical capital. As the Rabbis reproached the Lord with His lack of a regular education and graduation, these Jerusalemites cast up against Him His mean extraction.”—*Lange*.

Ver. 27.—“*Howbeit we know this man whence He is: but when Christ* (R. V. THE CHRIST) *cometh, no man* (R. V. ONE) *knoweth whence He is.*” In the Old Testament there are passages such as Isaiah liii. 8; Micah v. 2, which convey the idea that the origin of the Messiah would be wrapped in mystery. Hence they mean to say that, inasmuch as they knew His origin, He could not be the true Messiah.

Ver. 28.—“*Then* (R. V. THEREFORE) *cried Jesus in the temple as He taught,* (R. V. TEACHING AND) *saying, Ye both know Me, and ye know whence I am:*

and I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me is true, whom ye know not.” Christ seems to have raised His voice above their disputatious din, and boldly avows His Divine mission. “*Ye both know Me, and ye know whence I am.*” Very likely you know My birthplace, My parentage, and earthly history; but though you know My human side, you are ignorant of the Divine. “*I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me is true, Whom ye know not.*” You know whence My human body came, but you know not whence I came. I came from God, and you know Him not.

Ver. 29.—“*But I know Him: for* (R. V. BECAUSE) *I am from Him, and He hath sent Me.*” His counsels, though unknown to you, are known to Me. “*I am from Him.*” My origin and commission are Divine.

Ver. 30.—“*Then they* (R. V. THEREFORE) *sought to take Him: but no man laid hands* (R. V. HIS HAND) *on Him, because His hour was not yet come.*” So exasperated were they at the bold avowal of His Divinity, that they sought to seize Him at once. Yet some mysterious force held them back. “*No man laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come.*” “*His hour,*” that is, the time of His death.

HOMILETICS.

To gather all these verses together, in order to illustrate some one subject of thought, suited for public discourse, is a purpose which we feel to be important, albeit not a little difficult. The reigning passion of the various classes which Christ now addressed, and with which He in His remarks mainly contended, was a *desire to kill Him*. “*Why go ye about to kill Me?*” With this He starts His address; and the Jerusalemites inquire, “*Is not this He whom they seek to kill?*” As if they had said, We know a mortal malignity towards some one reigns in the heart of our rulers; is this the person? The following remarks are suggested concerning the malignant passion that now reigned amongst the rulers of the Jews.

I.—THIS DESIRE TO KILL HIM WAS INCONSISTENT WITH THEIR RELIGIOUS PROFESSION.

They were all confessedly believers in Moses. His authority was supreme, his word was their law, he was their religious leader,

their chief lawgiver, their illustrious prophet. But there was nothing in Moses that would sanction their malignant antagonism to Christ.

First: The *spirit* of their opposition was inconsistent with the moral law of Moses. "*Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill Me?*" You seek to kill Me, when the man whom you regard as your chief moral master has distinctly and in God's own name said, "Thou shalt not kill." None of you keepeth the law of Moses in this respect. Your malice towards Me is in direct opposition to the mandates of your acknowledged moral leader.

Secondly: The *proximate cause* of their opposition was inconsistent with the moral law of Moses. That which seemed to have exasperated them on this occasion was the healing of the impotent man at Bethesda, on the Sabbath day. This was the "*one work*," the particular work of His numerous performances which now fired their indignation. He gave perfect restoration to a suffering man on the Sabbath day—"made a man every whit whole,"*—this was His offence. But what did Moses do? Moses did what might have been considered something more objectionable than this. He circumcised children on the Sabbath-day, a work that inflicted a considerable amount of physical pain, and a great deal of manual labour. And not only did Moses do it, but your illustrious fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose authority is of greater antiquity, did the same. Could it be right for Moses and your fathers to do all this work on the Sabbath day, the work of mere ceremony, and wrong for Me to do a work of mercy? The crime and curse of religionists in all ages and lands have been, the exalting the ceremonial over the moral—the local, the temporary, and contingent above the universal, eternal, and absolute.

II.—THIS DESIRE TO KILL HIM IMPLIED A GREAT ERROR OF JUDGMENT.

"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment."† Judging from appearance, they concluded:

First: That a mere ordinary peasant had no Divine mission. Some of them, perhaps most of them, knew His humble birth-place and parentage, and concluded from His lowly appearance that He was a poor man, and nothing more. They were too blinded to discover beneath such apparently abject forms, a Divine spirit, character, and mission. It has ever been so. Men who judge from appearances have always failed to discern anything great or Divine in those who occupy the humbler walks of life. And thus the men of highest genius, the greatest intellect, Divinest inspirations and aims, have been counted by their contemporaries as

* See Germ, p. 198. † See Homily on these words at end of volume.

the "offscouring of all things." Judging from appearance, they concluded—

Secondly : That a ritualistic religion was a religion of righteousness. Had there been in connection with the ceremonies of the Temple the healing of the sick on the Sabbath day, they would have esteemed the work as highly sacred. None of the ceremonies of their ritualistic religion could they regard as of doubtful or even secondary importance. But the religion of ritualism is not always the religion of righteousness; but otherwise it is sometimes the religion of immorality. When men attend even to the divinest ceremonies of religion, merely as a matter of custom or form, they degrade their own spiritual natures, and insult Omniscience. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth." The religion of righteousness is the religion of love, not of law. Judging from appearance, they concluded—

Thirdly : That by killing a teacher, they would kill his influence. Why did the Jews and the rulers seek to kill Christ? Because of the doctrines He proclaimed—doctrines which not only clashed with their prejudices, but struck against their greed, popularity, and influence. They knew that if His doctrines spread, their authority would crumble, and from the elevated seat of Moses, they would pass into scenes of social degradation. Hence they thought that by killing Him they would kill His doctrines. Men who have judged from appearance have ever thought so, hence they have martyred unpopular teachers. But facts, as well as philosophy, show that such judgment is not a "*righteous judgment*." The blood of the martyrs has always been the "*seed of the Church*." The doctrines of a true teacher get fire, force, and sweep by inflicting on him a martyr's death. Christ's death was as a grain of corn that fell into the earth, there grew, spread, multiplied a thousandfold, and will multiply for ever. Do not judge by appearances. "Things are not what they seem."

III.—THIS DESIRE TO KILL HIM INVOLVED THEM IN PERPLEXITY.

"*Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this He, whom they seek to kill? But, lo, He speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? Howbeit we know this Man whence He is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence He is.*" There seems much confusion and bewilderment here. They thought they knew Him, yet they felt they did not know Him. They wondered, too, how a Man whom their rulers desired to kill should speak so boldly, without being arrested at once by them. Minds under a wrong-leading passion are sure to get into confusion. A corrupt passion spreads a deep haze over the whole region of intellect, and makes its path intricate and perplexing. No moral spirit can have its intellectual region clear

and bright, and its path straight and sunny, that is not under the control of benevolent dispositions. All the conflicting theories of the world concerning God, spirit, and morals, have their origin in a wrong state of heart. The intellectual confusion of hell grows out of malevolence. What they could not understand, Christ explains. "*Then cried Jesus in the temple as He taught, saying, Ye both know Me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me is true, whom ye know not.*" As they had no love in them, they could not see God; and as they could not see God, they could not understand Him who came from God, and was sent by Him. Observe what Christ asserts—

First: That He knows the Absolute. He is the only Being in the universe that knows Him.

Secondly: That He was a Messenger from the Absolute. "*He that sent Me.*" This is the great spiritual Ministry of the world. What are Popes, Cardinals, Archbishops, to Him? "This is My beloved Son, hear ye Him." Whoever else you disregard, "hear ye Him."

IV.—THIS DESIRE TO KILL HIM WAS DIVINELY RESTRAINED.

"*Then they sought to take Him: but no man laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come.*" Why did not their malignant desire work itself out at once? It was wide and strong enough; it glowed in all the breasts of the rulers of the nation, and perhaps in not a few of the men of Jerusalem, and the general population of the country. Why did they not at once seize Him and strike the fatal blow? The answer is, "*because His hour was not yet come.*" There was an unseen hand that held them back. He who holds the "wind in His fist," and the waters "in the hollow of His hand," turns the hearts of men as the rivers of water. With God for everything there is a season. Man may wish to hurry events and to go before the appointed time, but there is a power that holds him back until the hour strikes. The power that governs every wavelet in the ocean, controls every passing passion of mankind. "There is a power unseen that rules the illimitable world."

Conclusion. Learn—

First: That being hated by society is not always a proof of hate-worthiness. Here is One, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, holy, harmless, undefiled," hated with a mortal hatred. To be hated by a corrupt society is to have the highest testimony to your moral purity and goodness. The world loves its own, and hates all moral aliens. It worships the Herods as gods, and stones the Stephens as wretches unfit to live. "Marvel not if the world hate you; it hated Me before it hated you." Learn—

Secondly: That being hated by society is no reason for neglecting

our mission. Though Christ knew that in the leading men of Jerusalem there flamed the fiercest fires of indignation towards Him, yet to Jerusalem He goes, enters the Temple on a great public occasion, and fearlessly delivers His Divine message. That love for truth, God, and humanity, which inspired and ruled the heart of Christ, raised Him above the fear of men, made Him intrepid and invincible in the prosecution of His mission.

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. XXXI.

EVERY WHIT WHOLE.

"I have made a man every whit whole."—vii. 23.

We detach these words and take them to illustrate two subjects—

I.—THE GREAT WANT OF MAN.

What is his great want? To be made "*whole*." Man is unsound in every part.

First: He is corporeally unsound. Some men's physical organizations are healthier and haler than others, but even the strongest are unsound. The seeds of disease and death are in all. There is a canker-worm gnawing at the vitals of the most robust. The strongest man is, as compared to the weakest, like an oak to a fragile reed; but ever at the roots of the oak there is a rotting disease that is working its way up.

Secondly: He is intellectually unsound. The man who has the strongest mind is the subject of some mental infirmity. He lacks elasticity, freedom, clearness of vision, courage, and independency. He cannot see things completely, or hold them with a manly grasp. The stronger intellects are the most conscious of their unsoundness.

Thirdly: He is socially unsound. Socially, men were made to love their fellow-men, and to be loved by them, and thus be harmoniously united in reciprocal affection and services of mutual goodwill and usefulness. But it is not so. Socially, man is unsound in every point. The social heart is diseased with greed, envy, jealousy, ambition, and malice. So that the social world is rife with discords, contentions, and wars.

Fourthly: He is morally unsound. Morally, man has lost at once the true idea of right, and the true sympathy with right. His conscience is dim, infirm, torpid, buried in the flesh, "*carnally sold under sin*." Thus man in every part is unsound. He is lost, not in the sense of being *missed*, for God knows where he is; nor in the sense of being *extinct*, for he lives a certain kind of life; nor in the sense of being *inactive*, for he is in constant labour; but in the sense of *incapacity* to fulfil the grand object of his being. He is lost, in

the sense that the gallant ship is lost, when no longer sea-worthy; that the grand organ is lost, that has no longer the power to pour out music. We take these words to illustrate—

II.—THE GRAND WORK OF CHRIST.

What is it? It is to make "*man every whit whole.*" He makes man—

First: Corporeally whole. It is true that He allows the human body to go down to dust, but the essential personality He will re-animate. "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption," &c.

He makes man—

Secondly: Intellectually whole. Here He begins the healing of the intellect. He clears away from it the moral atmosphere of depravity, and opens its eyes so that it may see things as they are. Christ is working here to give man a sound intellect. In the future world it will be "*every whit whole,*" free from prejudice, from errors, and from all the fogs of depravity. He makes man—

Thirdly: Socially whole. He restores men to social soundness by filling them with that spirit of true philanthropy which prompts them not to seek their own things, but the things of each other, and to labour for the common good of men as men, irrespective of creeds, countries, races or religions. This He is doing now, this He will continue to do on this earth, until men shall love each other as brethren, and nations beat their "swords into ploughshares," "their spears into pruning-hooks," and hear of war no more. He will make the world, even here, "*every whit whole,*" socially, and in the Heavenly Jerusalem above the social soundness and order will be perfect. He makes man—

Fourthly: Morally whole. He will make man sound morally by bringing him under the control of SUPREME LOVE FOR THE SUPREMELY GOOD. Thus: He will take away the heart of "stone," and give it a heart of "flesh." At last He will cause all men to stand before Him without "spot or wrinkle, or any such thing."

CONCLUSION. What a Physician is Christ! He cures all manners of diseases. No malady can baffle His skill. The world has never wanted men who have tried to make people sound. It has its *corporeal* doctors, *intellectual* doctors, *social* doctors, *moral* doctors; but those who succeed most in their respective departments only prove by their miserable failures that they are miserable empirics. Here is a Physician that makes a "*man every whit whole.*"

No. XLVI.

CHRIST'S FIRST TWO DISCOURSES AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

(No. 3.)—THE FAVOURABLY DISPOSED AND THE MALIGNANTLY OPPOSED TO CHRIST.

"And many of the people believed," &c.—vii. 31—36.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 31.—*'And many of the people* (R. V. BUT OF THE MULTITUDE MANY) *believed.*" Their belief means perhaps nothing more than a passing impression that He was the Messiah, and does not include that faith in Him which secures everlasting life. "*When Christ cometh* (R. V. THE CHRIST SHALL COME), *will He do more miracles* (R. V. SIGNS) *than these* (R. V. THOSE) *which this Man hath done?'*" This implies that there was—(1.) A general belief that the true Messiah would work miracles. The Old Testament gave them to understand this (Isa. xxxv. 5, 6). (2.) A general acknowledgment that Christ's miracles had already been great.

Ver. 32.—"*The Pharisees heard that the people murmured* (R. V. THE MULTITUDE MURMURING) *such* (R. V. THESE) *things concerning Him; and the Pharisees and the Chief Priests sent officers to take Him.*" Here the actuating motive of the persecutors of Jesus is revealed. They feel a species of rivalry against Him; they fear the loss of their popularity and authority, and never can pardon Him for gaining the affections, and even, in some measure, the belief of His countrymen. Death—the death on the cross—alone can make reparation.

Ver. 33.—"*Then said Jesus* (R. V. JESUS THEREFORE SAID) *unto them.*" To whom? To the officers, or to the Pharisees who gave information, or to the whole assembly? Probably to the whole, with the chief priests especially in view: "*Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him that sent Me.*" Probably He meant by this language to intimate to His enemies that they need not be in a hurry to seize Him, as His departure by death was just at hand. But although they would lose Him from their midst, He would not be in the grave, but with His Father.

Ver. 34.—"*Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me: and where I am, thither* (R. V. OMITS THITHER) *ye cannot come.*" You will one day search earnestly for Me, but I shall not be found. When the judgment of Heaven falls on your nation (Matt. xxiv. 23) you will be anxious to find Me, as your Deliverer. "*Thither ye cannot come.*" I shall be beyond the reach of your malicious and murderous designs, in a state for which you possess no congeniality, and into which you cannot enter.

Ver. 35.—"*Then said the Jews* (R. V. THE JEWS THEREFORE SAID) *among themselves, Whither will He* (R. V. THIS MAN) *go, that we shall not find Him? will He go unto the dispersed* (R. V. DISPERSION) *among the Gentiles* (R. V. GREEKS), *and teach the Gentiles?'*" (R. V. GREEKS.) "The mocking malice of their reply (in vain questioned by Meyer) rises into a climax of three clauses: (1.) Whither will He go, that we might not follow Him? (Into Paradise?) (2.) Whither will He seek His fortune? Among the Jewish dispersion?—among the Gentiles?—with the less orthodox, less respectable and intelligent Jews? (3.) Or will He even teach the Greeks, to whom indeed, judging from His conduct towards the law, and His liberal utterance, He seems rather to belong than to us? But what they say in mockery must fulfil itself in truth. They prophesy like Caiaphas (chap. xi. 50, 51), and Pilate (xix. 19): 'Unto the dispersed among the Greeks.' The *διασποράν* (dispersion, abstract, *pro concret*) τῶν Ἑλλήνων (genitive of remoter relation), not the dispersed Gentiles (*Chrysostom*), or Hellenists, or Jews (*Sealiger*); but according to Greek specific usage (Jas. i. 1; 1 Pet. i. 1), the Jews dispersed in the Gentile world."

Ver. 36.—"*What manner of saying is this* (R. V. IS THIS WORD) *that He said, Ye shall seek Me, and shall not*

find Me : and where I am, thither (R. V. OMITTS THITHER) *ye cannot come ?*" Literally, What is this saying that He

said ? They felt the dark mystery of the words, and wished, probably, to regard them as nonsense.

HOMILETICS.

We have in these verses two classes of men in relation to Christ : those *who were favourably disposed*, and those who were *maligantly opposed to Him*.

I. THOSE WHO WERE FAVOURABLY DISPOSED.

"And many of the people believed on Him, and said, When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than these which this Man hath done ?" These people were the commonalty, as we should say ; the lower classes, who were more or less unsophisticated and free from religious prejudices and vested interests in existing institutions. Elsewhere it is said, these common "people heard Christ gladly." These people's faith in Him did not in all probability go farther than to dispose them favourably towards His teaching. It did not prompt them to commit themselves entirely to Him, to follow Him through evil as well as "good report." They were sufficiently instructed in religion to know that the Messiah would be a Miracle Worker, and they had witnessed so many of the miracles of Christ that they were disposed to regard Him as the promised One, the Anointed of God. They did not say, He is indeed the Christ ;—but, *"Is not this He ?"*

First : Their favourable disposition towards Him was grounded upon facts. There does not seem to be any question even amongst His malignant opponents as to the reality of His miracles. None seemed to deny them, or even to question them.

Secondly : Their favourable disposition toward Him intensified the opposition of His enemies. *"The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning Him ; and the Pharisees and the Chief Priests sent officers to take Him."* They felt that if the people believed in Him, their influence would wane, their authority depart, and all the honours and amenities connected with their elevated position would vanish. Hence the good opinions expressed now by the people fell as oil on the flames of their malignity.

Now, through all Christendom there has always been a large class of people favourably disposed towards Christ ; and their good opinions are based upon undeniable facts concerning Him. This class, even as in the days of Christ, intensify the opposition of enemies. When the atheist, the scientific infidel, the worldling, and the profligate, mark the favourable disposition of the people towards Christ, they, like these Pharisees and Chief Priests, only become the more anxious to banish Him from the world. Were it not for the favourably-disposed people, Christianity would soon be

extinguished. Popular sentiment is our bulwark against infidelity. The other class here are—

II.—THOSE WHO WERE MALIGNANTLY OPPOSED.

These were the "*Pharisees*" and the "*Chief Priests.*" Three remarks are suggested concerning them.

First: They were to be deprived of the fellowship of Christ. "*Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you,*" &c. But six months after this, Christ was crucified, and afterwards ascended to heaven, and returned to the bosom of His Father: It was only a "*little while*" that He was in their midst; it would have been well for them if they had availed themselves of that "*little while.*" The period of redemptive mercy with all men is but a "*little while.*" When He departed they lost Him for ever. Their sympathies and characters excluded them from all future fellowship with Him.

Secondly: They would vainly seek the help of Christ. "*Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me.*" The hour is approaching when the Roman legions would invade their country, destroy Jerusalem, and overwhelm their land with such desolation as had never been before, and perhaps will never be again. Then they would look out for Divine deliverance, but none would come. "*Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me.*" There is a time to "seek the Lord," a time when He may be found; and there is a time when He will be sought, and will not be found. "Many shall say to Me at that day, Lord, Lord!" &c.

Thirdly: They misunderstood the meaning of Christ. "*Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will He go, that we shall not find Him? will He go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? What manner of saying is this that He said, Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come?*" Observe—

(1.) They started from His words an ungenerous conjecture. "*Will He go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?*" That is, "Will He go amongst the Jews who are scattered amongst the Gentiles, or the Gentiles dispersed over all the world? In either case He will go to a contemptible class of men—men to be treated with disdain. If He leaves our glorious country, where else can He go but amongst such despicable people?"

(2.) They failed to attach to His words the true idea. "*What manner of saying is this?*" They had not reached the idea of His Divine mission and destiny; they were carnal, and judged after the flesh.

Thus it ever is with this class, the malignant opponents of Christ; they are deprived of His fellowship. Their worldly, corrupt natures exclude them from all intercourse with Him. Where He is,

they cannot come. He is in the sublime region of purity, righteousness, and benevolence: they are down in the depths of depravity. They must all seek the help of Christ one day, when it will be too late. On the last great day they shall agonize to enter in at the "strait gate" of His kingdom, and shall not be able, for the Master will have risen up and shut the door. They all misunderstood His meaning. They have "eyes but see not, ears but hear not." They judge after the flesh, they live in the "letter."

CONCLUSION. To which of these classes dost thou belong, my reader? Most probably the former. Albeit to be merely favourably disposed to Christ is not enough; there must be decision, consecration, vital affinity. Shouldst thou, peradventure, belong to the latter, ponder thy condition ere it be too late. "*Yet a little while,*" and the day of grace will be over; then thou wilt seek Him, but wilt "*not find Him.*"

No. XLVII.

CHRIST'S FIRST TWO DISCOURSES AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

(No. 4.)—THE TRANSCENDENT PHILANTHROPIST.

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink," &c.—vii. 37—39.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 37.—"*In* (R. V. NOW ON) *the last day, that* (R. V. THE) *great day of the feast.*" The last day of the feast of tabernacles was the closing feast day of the year (Lev. xxiii. 39). It was distinguished and sanctified by very remarkable ceremonies. "The generally joyous character of this feast," says *Olshausen*, "broke out on this day into loud jubilation, particularly at the solemn moment when the priest, as was done on every day of this festival, brought forth, in golden vessels, water from the stream of Siloam, which flowed under the temple-mountain, and solemnly poured it on the altar. Then the words of Isaiah xii. 3 were sung: 'With joy shall we draw water out of the well of salvation,' and thus the symbolical reference of this act, intimated in ver. 39, was expressed." "So ecstatic," says *Lightfoot*, "was the joy with which this ceremony was performed, accompanied with sounds of trumpets, that it used to be said, whoever had not witnessed it had never seen rejoicing at all." "*Jesus stood and*

cried, saying." On this grand occasion He probably stood on some eminence, so that all could see Him, and hear Him utter the sublime words,—"*If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.*" "*If any man,*" Jew or Gentile, "*thirst,*" craving for a higher life, "*let him come unto Me, and drink.*"

Ver. 38.—"*He that believeth on Me.*" Not on what men say *about* Me; not merely on the facts of My history; not on the doctrines of My teaching; but on *Me*—the living, loving, personal Son of God. "*As the Scripture hath said, out of His belly shall flow rivers of living water.*" The words, "*as the Scripture hath said,*" point perhaps to no particular passage, but to the general strain of Scripture in relation to Himself. (See Isa. lviii. 11; Joel iii. 18; Zech. xiv. 8; Ezek. xlvii. 1—11.) Most of these Scriptures refer to waters issuing from beneath the Temple. The aim is, to apply the typical waters to their now-present Antitype, proclaiming that the hour of their grand fulfilment has come. "*Out of His belly,*" Ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας

αἰτροῦ. Out of His body, or inner self; that is, out of His inner nature, shall flow the quickening influences of God.

Ver. 39.—“(But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should (R. V. BELIEVED ON HIM WERE TO) receive: for the Holy Ghost (R. V. THE SPIRIT) was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)” “For the Holy Ghost was not yet given.” Beyond all doubt the word “given,” or some similar word, is the right supplement here, if we are to insert any supplement at all. In chap. xvi. 7, the Holy Ghost is represented, not only as the gift of Christ, but as a Gift the communication of which was dependent upon His own departure to the Father. Now, as Christ was not yet gone, so the Holy Ghost was not yet given. “Because

that Jesus was not yet glorified.” This is one of those explanatory remarks of our Evangelist himself, which constitute a marked feature of this fourth Gospel. “The word ‘glorified’ is here used advisedly, to teach the reader, not only that the departure of Christ to the Father was indispensable to the giving of the Spirit, but that this illustrious Gift, direct from the hands of the ascended Saviour, was God’s intimation to the world, that He whom it had cast out, crucified, and slain, was His Elect in whom His soul delighted; and it was through the smiting of that Rock, that the waters of the Spirit, for which the Church was waiting, and with pomp at the feast of tabernacles proclaiming its expectation, has gushed forth upon a thirsty world.”—*Dr. Brown.*

HOMILETICS.

In these words, Christ appears as a *Transcendent Philanthropist*. “In the last day of the feast,” amidst assembled thousands, Jesus appears and offers with earnestness, and on the easiest conditions, the one great blessing which humanity requires, to make it holy, great, and happy, viz. the spiritually quickening influences of God.

I.—HE OFFERS THEM THE HIGHEST BLESSING.

What is it? Water. “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.” Water is the most precious element in nature: a life-giving, thirst-satisfying, nature-cleansing, and supporting element. What is the water Christ here offers?

First: It was a Divinely refreshing influence. “This spake He of the Spirit,” i. e. the Spirit of God, that “quickeneth all things:” the spirit of love, and truth, and peace, and righteousness. This is that which alone can satisfy the burning thirst of human souls. A soul without this spirit is like an Oriental traveller on the burning sands with no water.

Secondly: It was a Divinely refreshing influence that would roll through the centre of human nature. “Out of his belly”—out of himself—“shall flow rivers of living water.” The spiritual influences which Christ gives will not only allay the thirst, but stream forth in all directions to refresh and quicken the spirits of others. A good man is a fountain of life.

Thirdly: It was a Divinely refreshing influence that only came in its plenitude after the ascension of Christ. “The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” The

Holy Spirit was not yet given in all its power and fulness ; it came not until the day of Pentecost, when the influence came down like showers upon the new-mown grass.

Behold this Philanthropist ! How He transcends all the most illustrious benefactors of the race ! Who ever bestowed such benedictions as He ? He brings the refreshing influences of God into the human soul, and thus blesses it in order to make it a fountain of blessing to others. He fills the human with the Divine.

II.—HE OFFERS THEM THE HIGHEST BLESSING WITH INTENSE EARNESTNESS.

“Jesus stood and cried.” A term used to denote a proclamation with peculiar boldness and emphasis. Christ’s invitation was the opposite to all that is cold and formal. His own soul—which was on fire—went out with the cry. Would that we had heard His voice : how loud, how tuneful, how thrilling ! Loud as thunder, sweet as music, piercing as agony. Christ was no half-hearted philanthropist. He did not form a scheme to help the world, and work at it methodically, or with spasmodic earnestness. From beginning to end He was earnest : “I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day : the night cometh, when no man can work.” He travailed in soul to regenerate the world. Does incessant labour prove earnestness ? Does enormous sacrifice prove earnestness ? Does grappling with the fiercest foes prove earnestness ? Does soul-absorbing, self-sacrificing, unremitting struggle prove earnestness ? Then Christ was an earnest Philanthropist : “He poured out His very soul unto death.” *“Jesus stood and cried.”* And He stands now before humanity, and cries through nature, through providence, through reason, through conscience, and through the blessed Gospel, and says to all : “*If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.*” To Me, not to the caterers for public amusements, not to priests, philosophers, or poets, but to *Me*.

III.—HE OFFERS THEM THE HIGHEST BLESSING ON THE EASIEST CONDITION.

“He that believeth on Me.” He does not require great struggling, great labour, great sacrifice, as the condition of its bestowment, but simple faith in Him. Observe—

First : Faith in a proposition that is obviously true is one of the easiest acts of the mind. It is as easy for me to believe an evident truth as it is to open my eyes and behold the light. In addition to this, we have all a natural craving to believe. Man is a credulous creature, so much so that his crime and curse is, that he believes too much rather than too little.

Secondly: Faith in a person that is obviously good, is easier still. Faith in men is a universal instinct. We are made to trust in each other. We do so through all the stages of life, from the dawn of childhood to the night of age. True, as our experience advances, our faith in some men is severely tried and often shipwrecked; but to others we hold on until the last gasp. Now did ever a Being appear in history so easy to confide in as Christ—a Being so obviously perfect in love, truthfulness, tenderness, wisdom? All that is wanted, then, is to “believe” on Him, in order to get this highest good: this quickening, refreshing, satisfying influence of God. “*He that believeth on Me.*” Who cannot believe on Him? None but those who do not study Him as He appears on the pages of His biographers.

CONCLUSION. Blessed be heaven for such a Philanthropist as this! Why need the world be unhappy? Why need men be damned, either here or yonder, with such a Philanthropist?

No. XLVIII.

CHRIST'S FIRST TWO DISCOURSES AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

(No. 5.)—DIFFERENT IMPRESSIONS PRODUCED BY CHRIST'S TEACHING.

“Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet,” &c.—vii. 40—53.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 40.—“*Many of the people* (R. V. SOME OF THE MULTITUDE) *therefore, when they heard this saying* (R. V. THESE WORDS), *said, Of a truth this is* (R. V. THIS IS OF A TRUTH) *the Prophet.*” There was an expectation amongst some of the Jews that one of the old prophets would appear and precede the Messiah. Many of them thought that Jesus was one. They felt certain of this.

Ver. 41.—“*Others said, This is the Christ.*” Some of the Jews held that the prophet who was to come was different from the Messiah, and was to herald His coming. Others held that He was the same with Christ. Here they seemed to be distinguished. Some took Jesus for the prophet, and others for the Christ Himself. “*But some said.*” “These objectors were always ready, ever stifling by the Scripture itself the yearnings of faith. A true sample this of the world's wisdom in things spiritual. Knowing so much, and yet knowing so little—ready enough to bring forward diffi-

culties and pick flaws, but not at all ready with the proper explanations, even when they are plain to a child.” —*Jacobus.* “*Shall Christ* (R. V. WHAT DOETH THE CHRIST) *come out of Galilee?*” Those who put this question insinuated falsehood or a desire to pervert facts. Christ did not come “*out of Galilee*” in the sense of being born there. He was born in Bethlehem. He was brought up, it is true, in Nazareth in Galilee, but not born there.

Ver. 42.—“*Hath not the Scripture said, That* (R. V. THE CHRIST) *Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of* (R. V. FROM) *Bethlehem, where* (R. V. THE VILLAGE WHERE) *David was?*” (Isaiah xi. 1; Jer. xxiii. 5; Micah v. 2.) “*Where David was*” (1 Sam. xvi.).

Ver. 43.—“*So there was* (R. V. AROSE) *a division among the people* (R. V. IN THE MULTITUDE) *because of Him.*” “This division, or violent split, among those who accorded recognition to the Lord in different degrees, must be distinguished from the division be-

tween all those who are friendly to Him and the enemies of whom (ver. 44) John goes on at once to speak, or the analogous divisions in ch. ix. 6 and x. 18. There were at first but a few among the people who made common cause with the hostile Pharisees.” —*Lange*.

Ver. 44.—“*And some of them would have taken Him.*” “*Some.*” Who? Not any of the two preceding classes; but the people who heard His words and were exasperated. “*No man laid hands on Him.*” Why not? What held them back? Conscience, and the restraining force of justice.

Ver. 45.—“*Then came the officers (R. V. THE OFFICERS THEREFORE CAME) to the Chief Priests and Pharisees.*” These “*officers*” are the same in all probability as those spoken of in verse 32, who were sent by the Sanhedrim to take Him. They had been on the watch for some hours during this public excitement. Why did they pause so long? This is the question the Chief Priests and Pharisees asked them. “*Why have ye not brought (R. V. DID YE NOT BRING) Him?*” Why? They could not, for the causes that prevented some of the people from taking Him.

Ver. 46.—“*The officers answered, Never man spake like this Man*” (R. V. NEVER MAN SO SPAKE). This was their answer, and explains the reason why they had not brought Him, viz. the impression they had received of His transcendent excellence as a Teacher. There was a grandeur, an independency, a purity, a power, and a catholicity in His words that impressed them with the surpassing greatness of the Teacher.

Ver. 47.—“*Then answered them the Pharisees (R. V. THE PHARISEES THEREFORE ANSWERED THEM), Are ye also deceived?*” (R. V. LED ASTRAY.) Is it possible that you, our servants, our officers, are cheated by this impostor?

Ver. 48.—“*Have (R. V. HATH) any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him?*” This means, Since none

of the rulers or the Pharisees believed on Him, how monstrous it is that such men as you, ignorant hirelings, should yield in any way to His claims.

Ver. 49.—“*But this people*” (R. V. MULTITUDE). The language is contemptuous, this ignorant rabble. “*Who (R. V. WHICH) knoweth not the law are cursed.*” They are utterly ignorant of all law, are “*cursed*,” that is, We, who are the religious law-givers, have cursed them.

Ver. 50.—“*Nicodemus saith unto them.*” He was a member of the Sanhedrim. “*(He that came to Jesus by night (R. V. HE THAT CAME TO HIM BEFORE), being one of them.)*” We have an account of his appearing to Christ in the third chapter. This timid and cowardly disciple, instead of thundering condemnation in their ears, puts a question.

Ver. 51.—“*Doth our law judge any (R. V. A) man, before it (R. V. EXCEPT IT FIRST) hear him (R. V. FROM HIMSELF), and know what he doeth?*” As if he had said, You talk about law, but where is the law in your conduct? Law requires an honest trial, before ever a criminal is condemned (Exod. xxiii. 1; Dent. i. 16, 17; xix. 15).

Ver. 52.—“*They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee?*” This fierce rejoinder of the Pharisees strikingly and solemnly contrasts with the very feeble defence which Nicodemus had put forth. It expresses utter scorn for the man who in any way sympathized with Jesus. “*Search, and look: for (R. V. SEE THAT) out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.*” Here they showed their ignorance; for was not Jonah a prophet, and Elijah a prophet, and came they not out of Galilee? Besides, Christ did not come out of Galilee in the sense of being born there, He came out of Bethlehem.

Ver. 53.—“*And every man went unto his own house.*” (R. V. OMITS THIS VERSE HERE AND INSERTS IT AT COMMENCEMENT OF CHAP. VIII.) Finding their malignant attempts so far unsuccessful, the members of the Sanhedrim went to their own houses.

HOMILETICS.

The incidents recorded in the verses before us present certain facts connected with Christ's discourses at the feast of tabernacles additional to those which have already been noticed. These facts indeed are generally developed through the *teaching of Christ* in every age and land. And in relation to His Teaching it appears—

I.—THAT IT PRODUCED A VAST VARIETY OF OPINIONS CONCERNING HIM.

"*Many of the people,*" &c. Some of His hearers on this occasion said He was a "*prophet*;" some, that He was the "*Christ*;" whilst many denied that He was either, and were ready to wreak vengeance on Him as an impostor. So there was a "*division*," a schism amongst them. Diversity of opinion amongst the hearers of Christ is shown on another occasion. "Jesus said, Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am? And they said, Some say that Thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets" (Matt. xvi. 13, 14). The variety of speculative opinion which Christ's teaching has always produced reveals—

First: The great diversity in the minds of men. No two minds are exactly alike in the kind or measure of faculty and tendency. Nor have any two minds passed through exactly the same educational process. Hence it is almost impossible for any two minds to form exactly the same opinions concerning any person or proposition. This variety gives a freshness to the great field of human thought, and it should teach man to treat the conclusions of his brother with respect, however much they may differ from his own. It should also warn those ecclesiastics and rulers who presume to govern the opinions of men, of their folly and their wickedness.

Let those who sit in priestly state
As lordlings over mind,
And by the notions they dictate
The thoughts of men would bind,
Remember well that on this earth
It must be ever heard,
The Lord hath yet more light and truth
To break forth from His Word.—"*Biblical Liturgy.*"

This reveals—

Secondly: The moral perversity in the souls of men. Wrong opinions in all cases on moral subjects indicate a perversion of judgment. The broad eternal principles of moral virtue are so self-obvious and radiant, that wrong conclusions concerning them are inexcusable in the case of all to whom they are presented. Christ's life was at once the incarnation and brightest revelation of those principles; and hence diversity of opinion in relation to His character implies perversity of heart. Were all men, whatever

their diversity of mind, to give to Him a proper study, they would say, "Master, we know that Thou art true." This reveals—

Thirdly: The intellectual freedom which Christ allows men. Mighty as He is in power, far-reaching as His influence is in the depths of the human soul, and potent as are His truths, He does not coerce thought, does not compel men to believe, He leaves them free. "Will ye also go away?"

In relation to His teaching it appears—

II.—THAT IT PRODUCED A PROFOUND IMPRESSION AS TO HIS TRANSCENDENT WORTH.

"*Never man spake like this Man.*" This was the utterance of the rough Roman officers who were sent forth by their masters to seize Him; and it is the language that impartial minds in all times and lands must adopt; there never was such a Teacher. "*Never man spake like this Man.*"* So original, so independent, so suggestive, so natural, so tender, so faithful, so devout, so soul-commanding. As a Teacher, in all these respects He throws the greatest sages of antiquity in the shade, and makes modern scientists dwindle into insignificance.

"*Never man spake like this Man.*" Such is the opinion of the greatest men—legislators philosophers, and poets—of the world. He stands alone. The thoughts of the greatest thinkers of all times are, as compared to His, only as the frail productions of human art compared to the magnificent organizations of living nature. "The whole world," says a modern author, "has confirmed this sentence. Believers have felt its truth, as they have imbibed the instructions of their heavenly Master; and infidels have not been able to suppress their admiration at the Sermon on the Mount, the Golden Rule, the Parables of the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, and the prayer of Jesus with His disciples before His death. May it not be found at last that He lifted up in vain His voice of sweet persuasion and awful warning, to plead with our negligent and hardened hearts, and to win us to God and heaven; but, hearing, may we understand; and understanding, feel; and feeling, practise the precepts of life and immortality."

In relation to His teaching, it appears—

III.—THAT IT PRODUCED A DEADLY HOSTILITY TOWARDS HIM.

"*Some of them would have taken Him,*" &c. In the hostility which the teaching of Christ roused in the minds of these Chief Priests and Pharisees we discover several evils.

First: Intolerance. Exasperated by the doctrines He proclaimed and the influence He was exerting upon the people, they wickedly resolved to crush Him. "*Some of them would have taken Him.*"

* See my "Genius of the Gospel on Matthew" on these words.

Deep and strong was the desire they had to arrest His progress, cripple His energies, and even destroy His very existence. Antagonism to Christianity is ever associated with intolerance; it denounces argument and betakes itself to violence. Another evil we discover is—

Secondly: Superciliousness. "*Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him?*" The spirit of this language is: What is the worth of your opinions compared with ours—the "*rulers*" of the people? They are beneath contempt. With what haughtiness the enemies of Christianity have always treated its disciples! They have branded them as fools and fanatics; they deem themselves the wise, forsooth! Another evil we discover is—

Thirdly: Insolence. "*But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.*" "*This people!*" Meaning this rabble, this ignorant mob. The enemies of Christianity have always treated its adherents as the "offscouring of all things." Another evil we discover is—

Fourthly: Ridicule. "*Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.*" These words were addressed to Nicodemus, whose mean spirit their hostility had stirred up to a little courage, sufficient to say in their presence, "*Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and knoweth what he doeth?*" But little respect have I for such discipleship as that of Nicodemus. He was too mean-spirited and craven. "*Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him?*" Why ask such a question? O Nicodemus, why didst thou not say, "Our law condemns your conduct? You are perpetrating the greatest moral enormity in treating with heartless indignity the Holy Son of God! Woe to you!" So far as he was concerned, their reply served him right. "*Art thou also of Galilee?*" Art thou one of the despicable Galileans? Ridicule has often been one of the ready instruments of the opponents of Christianity. Another evil we discover is—

Fifthly: Humiliation. "*Every man went unto his own house.*" So far the malignant plans of the Chief Priests and Pharisees were baffled, and they retired home no doubt with spirits chagrined and humbled. Such will be the condition of all the opponents to Christianity sooner or later.

Such are some of the evils connected with the hostility which the teaching of Christ awakened in the minds of those old bigoted leaders of the Jewish people.

CONCLUSION. How stand we in relation to Christ? Are our minds merely taken up with speculative opinions concerning Him, or are our hearts centred in Him by a living faith? True faith is something independent of what are called "the evidences." It comes by a soul recognition of Christ in the glory of His person, and the adaptation of His teaching to the intellect, conscience, and deep-felt needs of the heart.

“A man of subtle reasoning asked
 A peasant if he knew
 Where lies the internal evidence
 That proved his Bible true.
 The terms of disputative art
 Had never reached his ear ;
 He laid his hand upon his heart,
 And only answered ‘Here!’”

No. XLIX.

CHRIST AS A RELIGIOUS TEACHER.

“Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. And early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came unto Him ; and He sat down, and taught them.”—viii. 1, 2.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Concerning the genuineness of these and the following ten verses of this chapter, which is questioned by some and denied by others, we shall offer remarks in our next section. Meanwhile we shall confine our attention to these two verses.

Ver. 1.—“*Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives.*” Some say that this ought to have been at the conclusion of the preceding chapter, following the words, “every man went unto his own house.” Whilst the people had perhaps all their own houses to go to, and to them they retired, Jesus had no home, but withdrew to the “*Mount of Olives.*” “This spot is a high hill rising quite abruptly from the valley of Jehoshaphat, and overlooking Jerusalem on the east side. At its foot between the city and the hill, is the brook Kedron ; and on its slope, just across the brook, is the garden of Gethsemane. A winding footpath leads over the hill to Bethany on the other side. Our Lord seems

to have passed the night on the Mount, perhaps at Bethany, where He was wont to resort, away from the bustle and the turmoil of the crowded city, and from the malice of His enemies.” From Luke xxii. 37 we learn that He was in the habit of spending the night on the Mount of Olives during His last residence at Jerusalem.

Ver. 2.—“*And early in the morning.*” Ὁρθρον. “John writes elsewhere, πρωτα (xviii. 28) ; πρωι (xx. 1) ; Luke, on the contrary, ὀρθρον. It is to be observed here, however, that the term ὀρθρον denotes more precisely the dawn of morning, and that it is intended to denote just this time.”—Lange. “*He came again into the temple, and all the people came unto Him ; and He sat down, and taught them.*” Though He had been persecuted in the temple, as we find in the twenty-fifth verse of the preceding chapter, with undaunted courage He resorts thither again in order to teach the people.

HOMILETICS.

The two verses suggest to us a few thoughts concerning *Christ as a Religious Teacher.*

I.—HE WAS AS A TEACHER DEVOUTLY STUDIOUS.

It was from the solitudes of the Mount of Olives, where He had spent the previous night, that He went to the temple to preach. Christ often had recourse to the loneliness of the hills for holy meditation and communion with the Eternal. There, in those profound silences where alone the voices of truth are heard, He

poured out His thoughts upon the loftiest themes, and opened His heart to the influences of His great Father's loving mind. Devout solitude is the scene where preparation for public speaking can be best attained. Without this, Theological Halls and Elocutionary Schools are worse than useless. It is only in solitude that a man can break the shells and reach the germs of the higher truths of life and destiny. There only, by bathing them in the living current of devotion, can he make them so real to himself as to make them realities to others. There are three things that seem essential in order properly to preach the Gospel, and these can come only by seasons of *devout solitude*.

First: Self-formed conviction of Gospel truth. Gospel truth is our great instrument of social usefulness; that without which nothing else will be of any service. It is the "power of God unto salvation." But how is this to be wielded? By circulating copies of the Scripture, or by a mere recitation of their contents, or by repeating what other people have said and written concerning those truths? All these may be and are useful in their way. But there is one thing indispensable, even to do these things effectively, and that is, *self-formed convictions*. Heaven has so far honoured our nature, that the Gospel, in order to obtain its grand victories, must pass as living beliefs through the soul of him that employs it. If we would effectually use the Gospel to help society, we must see, taste, and handle it with our own souls. The men who speak the Gospel without such convictions,—and there are thousands of such amongst conventional preachers,—can never enrich the world. They are echoes of old voices; what they say was in the world before they came into it. They are but mere channels through which old dogmas flow. But he who speaks what he believes, and because he believes, speaks in some sense a new thing to the race. The doctrine comes from him instinct and warm with life. His individuality is impressed upon it. The world never had it in that exact form before, and never would have had it so had he not believed and spoken. Now, devout solitude is necessary to turn the Gospel into this power of living conviction; you can never get it elsewhere. Alone with God, you can search the Gospel to its foundation, and feel the congruity of its doctrines with your reason, its claims with your conscience, its provisions with your wants.

Secondly: Unconquerable love for Gospel truth. There is an immense practical opposition to Gospel truth in society. Men's pride, prejudice, pleasures, pursuits, and temporal interests are now, as ever, against it. It follows, therefore, that those who think more of the favour and applause of society than of the claims of truth, will not deal with it honestly, earnestly, and therefore successfully. The man only who loves truth more than popularity,

fortune, or even life, can so use it as really and everlastingly to benefit mankind. In devout solitude you can cultivate this invincible attachment to truth, and you may be made to feel with Paul, who said—"I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ."

Thirdly: A living expression of Gospel truth. We must be "living epistles." Our conduct must confirm and illumine the doctrines which our lips declare. Gospel sermons which are the expressions of life, are life-giving. Gospel truth must be embodied; the "Word must become flesh;" it must be drawn out in living characters in all the phases of our every-day existence; its spirit must be our inspiration, if we would make it instrumental for good. Now, for the production of such sermons, I am convinced there must be seasons of devout solitude; hours when, under the silent sunbeams of eternity, ideas run into emotions, circulate as a vital current through every vein of the soul, and form the very stamina of our being. It is said of Moses, "that the skin of his face shone while he talked with God." But in seasons of devout solitude our whole nature may grow luminous, and every phase of our character coruscate with the deep things of the Spirit. John the Baptist gained his invincible energy in the lonely wilderness; Paul prepared to be an apostle in the quiet of Arabia; and it was in the awful midnight solitude of Gethsemane that an angel from heaven came to strengthen Jesus for His work. It is beneath the earth's green mantle, in secret and silence amongst the roots, that the trees of the forest turn the elements of nature to their own advantage. And it is down in the quiet depths of spiritual realities, alone with God, that the soul only can turn this world to its true use. The verses suggest that—

II.—HE WAS AS A TEACHER SUBLIMELY COURAGEOUS.

"*He came again into the temple.*" In that temple during the previous days, His life had been threatened. It is said that "they sought to take Him" (chap. vii. 30); that is, to kill Him. Officers had been despatched on the previous day from the Sanhedrim in order to seize Him. Yet, notwithstanding this malignant determination to destroy Him, with a noble daring He goes "*early in the morning*" of the next day "*into the temple.*" You must distinguish this spirit of fearless daring from that which the world calls courage.

First: Brute courage is dead to the sacredness of life. The great bulk of the armies of Europe is formed of men who have gone into the profession (as it is called) without any deep conviction as to the sacredness of human life. They are men, for the most part, who hold life cheaply. Their courage is an animal and a mercenary thing. Soldiers are not spiritual men, but sanguinary bipeds who

have sold themselves to carnage. This was not the courage that Christ possessed and displayed. Deeply did He feel, and frequently did He teach, the sanctity of life. He came, not to *destroy* men's lives, but to *save* them. "What," said He, "shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Secondly: Brute courage is indifferent to the grand mission of life. The man of brute valour is not penetrated, still less inspired, with the question, What is the grand object of my life? Wherefore was I sent into the world? Am I here to work out the great designs of my Maker, and to rise into angelhood, or to be a mere fighting machine? On the contrary, Christ's regard for the grand mission of His life made Him courageous. He held the will of His Father as a dearer thing to Him than His mortal existence. He came to "bear witness to the truth;" and to fulfil this work He dared the fury of His enemies, and willingly risked His own mortal life.

Thirdly: Brute courage is always inspired by mere animal passion. It is when the blood is up the man is daring. And the blood, what is it? The mere blood of the enraged tiger or the infuriated lion. When the blood cools down, the man's courage, such as it is, collapses. Not so with the valour of Christ. His courage was that of deep conviction of duty. His excitement was not animal, but spiritual—not malign or ambitious, but reverent and benign. "As Luther," *Dr. D'Aubigné* informs us, "drew near the door which was about to admit him into the presence of his judges (the Diet of Worms), he met a valiant knight, the celebrated George of Frundsberg, who, four years later, at the head of his German lansquenets, bent the knee with his soldiers on the field of Pavia, and then, charging to the left of the French army, drove it into the Ticino, and in a great measure decided the captivity of the King of France. The old General, seeing Luther pass, tapped him on the shoulder, and shaking his head, blanched in many battles, said kindly, 'Poor monk, poor monk! thou art now going to make a nobler stand than I or any other captain have ever made in the bloodiest of our battles. But if thy cause is just, and thou art sure of it, go forward in God's name, and fear nothing. God will not forsake thee.' A noble tribute of respect paid by the courage of the sword to the courage of the mind."

Nothing is more necessary for a religious teacher than courage, for his mission is to strike hard against the prejudices, the self-interests, the dishonesties, the cherished passions and sinful pursuits of the masses. No man without an invincible valour of soul can do the work of a religious teacher in this age. The popular preacher must, more or less, be cowardly and conciliatory. The less force of conviction a preacher has, the more he is fitted for popularity.

Dead fish flow with the stream; it requires living ones with much inner force to cut up against the current. The verses suggest that—

III.—HE WAS AS A TEACHER EARNESTLY DILIGENT.

“Early in the morning.” Elsewhere we are informed that He rose up “a great while before day.” He did not indulge Himself in sleep. When sleep, which generally does its refreshing work in a few hours, had left Him, and the sun struck his rays upon the horizon, He was up at His great work. “I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.”* Two things should make a teacher earnestly diligent—

First: The transcendent importance of his mission. What has he to do? To enlighten and regenerate imperishable spirits that are in a morally ruinous condition. What is involved in the loss of one soul?

Secondly: The brevity of his life. How short the time, even in the longest lived men, for the prosecution of this the greatest of all human undertakings! Oh that all preachers of the Holy Word were inspired with something of the earnestness of Christ’s spirit! Then indeed they would be earnest in season and out of season, &c. No time would be wasted in sleep, in self-indulgence, or even in occupations that had not a salutary bearing on the great mission.

“Oh! let all the soul within you
For the truth’s sake go abroad.
Strike! let every nerve and sinew
Tell on ages—tell for God.”

The verses suggest that—

IV.—HE WAS AS A TEACHER BEAUTIFULLY NATURAL.

“He sat down, and taught them.” There was nothing stiff or official in Christ’s manner of teaching. All was free, fresh, and elastic as nature.

First: He was natural in attitude. Modern rhetoric has rules to guide a public speaker as to his posture, how he should move his hand, point his finger, and roll his eyes. All such miserable directions are not only to the utmost degree unlike Christ, but degrading to the moral nature of the speaker, and detrimental to his oratoric influence. Let a man be charged with great thoughts, and those thoughts will throw his frame into the most befitting attitudes.

Secondly: He was natural in expression. He attended to no classic rule of composition; the words and similes He employed were such as His thoughts ran into at first, and such as His hearers could well understand. To many modern preachers composition is

* See a reading on early rising, “The Practical Philosopher.” Published by R. Dickinson.

everything. Words the most select and ornate, sentences the most polished, and periods the most rounded, paragraphs the most finished and brilliant, they scrupulously regard. How unlike Christ ! and what solemn trifling with Gospel truth !

Thirdly: He was natural in tones. The tones of His voice, we may rest assured, rose and fell according to the thoughts that occupied His soul. The voice of the modern teacher is often hideously artificial. Just so far as a speaker goes away from his nature, either in language, attitude, or tone, he loses self-respect, inward vigour, and social force.

No. L.

THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY.

(*Jesus in Jerusalem.*—*Account of the woman taken in adultery.*—JOHN viii. 3—11.)

“And the Scribes and Pharisees brought unto Him a woman taken in adultery ; and when they had set her in the midst, they say unto Him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act,” &c.—viii. 3—11.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—On the question of the genuineness of this paragraph we cannot do better than by presenting our readers with a summary of the arguments as given by Dr. Farrar: “I. ARGUMENTS AGAINST ITS GENUINENESS.—(1.) It is not found in some of the best and oldest MSS. ; (2.) nor in most of the Fathers (*e.g.* Origen, Cyril, Chrysostom, Theophylact, Tertullian, Cyprian) ; (3.) nor in many ancient versions (*e.g.* Sahidic, Coptic, and Gothic) ; (4.) in other MSS. it is marked with *obeli* and asterisks, or a space is left for it, or it is inserted elsewhere ; (5.) it contains an extraordinary number of various readings (*‘variant singula fere verba in codicibus plerisque.’*—*Tischendorf*) ; (6.) it contains several expressions not elsewhere found in St. John ; and (7.) it differs widely in some respects—particularly in the constant use of the connecting *καί*—from the style of St. John throughout the rest of the Gospel. Several of these arguments are weakened, (i.) by the fact that the diversities of readings may be reduced to three main recensions ; (ii.) that the rejection of the passage may have been due to a false dogmatical bias ; (iii.) that the silence of some of the Fathers may be accidental, and of others prudential. II. ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF ITS

GENUINENESS.—(1.) It is found in some old and important uncials, and in more than 300 cursive MSS., in some of the Itala, and in the Vulgate ; (2.) The tendencies which led to its deliberate rejection would have rendered all but impossible its invention or interpolation ; (3.) It is quoted by Augustine, Ambrose, and Jerome, and treated as genuine in the Apostolic Constitutions. St. Jerome’s testimony is particularly important, because he says that in his time it was found *‘in multis et Græcis et Latinis codicibus,’* and it must be remembered that nearly all of these must have been considerably older than any which we now possess. The main facts to be observed are, that though the dogmatic bias against the passage might be sufficient to account for its rejection, it gives us no help in explaining its want of resemblance to the style of St. John. A very simple hypothesis will account for all difficulties. If we suppose that the story of the woman accused before our Lord of many sins,—to which Eusebius alludes as existing in the Gospel of the Hebrews,—is identical with this, we may suppose without any improbability, either (i.) that St. John (as Alford hesitatingly suggests) may here have adopted a portion of current synoptic tradition, or (ii.) that

the story may have been derived originally from Papias, the pupil of St. John, and having found its way into the Gospel of the Hebrews, may have been adopted gradually into some MSS. of St. John's Gospel. Many recent writers adopt the suggestion of Holtzmann, that it belongs to the '*Ur-marcus*,' or ground doctrine of the Synoptists. Whoever embodied into the Gospels this traditionally remembered story deserved well of the world.*

Ver. 3.—"*And the Scribes and Pharisees brought unto Him* (R. V. BRING A WOMAN) *a woman taken in adultery; and when they had* (R. V. HAVING) *set her in the midst.*" These Scribes and Pharisees had tried to entrap Him before, but were foiled. A death penalty was involved in the act here charged against the woman. We may therefore suppose that the Sanhedrim moved now in the matter.

Ver. 4.—"*They say unto Him, Master, this woman was* (R. V. HATH BEEN) *taken in adultery, in the very act.*" Alford's reading of this verse is as follows: "The priests say unto Him, tempting Him that they might have to accuse Him, Master, this woman hath been taken in adultery, in the very act."

Ver. 5.—"*Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned* (R. V. TO STONE SUCH): *but what sayest Thou?*" (R. V. WHAT THEN SAYEST THOU OF HER?) *οὐ οὖν τί λέγεις,* "What now sayest Thou?"

Ver. 6.—"*This they said, tempting Him, that they might have* (R. V. WHEREOF) *to accuse Him.*" That is, putting Him to a test in order to have ground for accusation against Him. They thought that their question was such that, whatever answer He gave, He would involve Himself in guilt. If He said, "Stone her," they would charge Him with assuming a political authority that did not belong to Him. If He said, "Let her alone, do nothing with her," they would charge Him with encouraging immorality and abrogating their law. "*But Jesus stooped down,*"—He was in a sitting posture

before,—"*and with His finger wrote on the ground.*" This gesture was familiar to antiquity as a representation of deep thinking, languor, or absence of mind (see the representation in Lücke, page 269). Perhaps by the act Christ meant to express disregard of their question. "*As though He heard them not*" (R. V. OMITS). This clause is not in the original, it is supplied by our translators. It should be struck out, as it conveys the idea that Christ meant to deceive.

Ver. 7.—"*So* (R. V. BUT) *when they continued asking Him, He lifted up Himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.*" "*Without sin.*" Without this sin, in spirit if not in act; and whose conscience acquits him of any such sin, "*let him first cast a stone.*" Thus He turns the tables upon them. Under the law (Deut. xvii. 7) the stone in such a case was to be hurled by the witnesses of the guilt; and this in order that they might feel the responsibility of giving evidence.

Ver. 8.—"*And again He stooped down, and* (R. V. WITH HIS FINGER) *wrote on the ground.*" What wrote He? No one knows. Did He stoop and write merely to give the accusers of this woman an opportunity to slink away unobserved? Probably so. Anyhow they availed themselves of the occasion.

Ver. 9.—"*And they which* (R. V. WHEN THEY) *heard it, being convicted by their own conscience,* (R. V. OMITS THIS) *went out one by one.*" It is historically stated that at this time many prominent Rabbis were living in adultery, hence the words of Christ caused them to be convicted by their own conscience. "*Beginning at* (R. V. FROM) *the eldest,*" or rather at the elders in the official sense, and not the seniors in age. "*Even unto the last.*" One by one they slunk away. They did not dare to wait until Christ rose from His bent attitude and looked lightning and spoke thunder to them. "*And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing* (R. V. WHERE SHE WAS) *in the midst.*" Only the band of accusers ran away, the disciples and the people probably

* See "Life of Christ," by Dr. Farrar, vol. ii. p. 62.

remained and were looking on. Why did not the accused run away? Christ had His grasp upon her conscience; she felt chained to His judgment-seat.

Vers. 10, 11.—“*When Jesus had* (R. V. AND JESUS LIFTED) *lifted up Himself, and saw none but the woman,* (R. V. OMITTS THIS) *He said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers?* (R. V. WHERE ARE THEY?) *hath no man condemned thee?* (R. V. DID NO MAN CONDEMN THEE?) *She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more*” (R. V. GO THY WAY; FROM HENCEFORTH SIN NO MORE). “What inimitable tenderness and grace! Conscience of her own guilt, and till now in the hands of men who had talked of stoning her, wondering at the skill with which her accusers had been dispersed, and the grace of the few words addressed to herself, she would be dis-

posed to listen, with a reverence and teachableness before unknown, to our Lord’s admonition. Jesus pronounces no pardon upon the woman, like, ‘Thy sins be forgiven thee,’ ‘Go in peace,’ much less does He say that she had done nothing condemnable. He simply leaves the matter where it was. He meddles not with the magistrate’s office, nor acts the judge in any sense. But in saying ‘Go, and sin no more,’ which had been before said to one who undoubtedly believed (chap. v. 14), more is probably implied than expressed. If brought suddenly to conviction of sin, to admiration of her Deliverer, and to a willingness to be admonished and guided by Him, this call to begin a new life may have carried with it what would ensure and naturally bring about a permanent change.”—*Dr. Brown.*

HOMILETICS.

Amongst the thoughts which this wonderful narrative suggests, there are three worthy of notice, which are true whether the narrative is genuine or not.

I.—THAT THE VILEST SINNERS ARE OFTEN THE GREATEST ACCUSERS.

Who were the accusers of this adulteress? The Scribes and Pharisees; and according to Christ’s judgment, and according to the judgment of all who would look at actions through His system of morality, they were, of all sinners, the greatest. It is true that on this occasion their accusation of the woman was inspired by their dislike to Christ, rather than a dislike to her or a hatred of her crime. “*They say unto Him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest Thou? This they said, tempting Him, that they might have to accuse Him.*” They sought by this to entrap Him, to get Him to do or say something in the matter on which they could found a charge that would lead to His ruin. If He acquitted her, they would accuse Him of violating the law of Moses; and if He condemned her, they would accuse Him of political usurpation—for the power to condemn to death was invested entirely in Roman authority. But whether their conduct in this instance was prompted by a dislike to Christ, or a dislike to the woman, it suggests and illustrates the truth, that the greatest sinners are generally the greatest accusers. The

more base and corrupt a man is, the more ready he is to charge crimes on others, and the more severe he is in his censures on the conduct of his fellow-men. The more unchaste, untruthful, dishonest a man is, the more ready is he to suspect the chastity, truthfulness, and probity of others. Take care of social accusers—the demon of the old Scribes and Pharisees is in them! Were there worse men in Judæa or on the round earth than these Scribes and Pharisees, and members of the Sanhedrin, who now accused this woman? It is ever so: the more base and corrupt a man is, the more ready to charge crimes on others, and the more severe in his censures.

II.—THAT THE SEVEREST JUDGE OF SINNERS IS THEIR OWN CONSCIENCE.

"They which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one."

See how Jesus touched the consciences of these sinners! He *"stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground, as though He heard them not. So when they continued asking Him, He lifted up Himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again He stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst."* Observe two things—

First: Christ's method of awakening their conscience. (1.) He expresses by a symbolic act His superiority over their malignant purposes. They were full of unholy excitement. Evil was in them now a passion, and they were impatient for Him to commit Himself, but He is sublimely calm. He stoops down as if He were utterly indifferent to their miserable aims. They must have felt this. There is often a power in holy silence which no words, however eloquent, can carry. (2.) He puts the question of the woman's punishment upon their *own* consciences. *"He that is without sin,"* &c.

As if He had said: "I do not defend her conduct; stone her if you like. But let her be stoned by those who are free from sin, for it is monstrous for one sinner to stone another. Are you without sin? Then stone her. If not, take care." This touched them. Observe—

Secondly: The force of their awakened consciences. They were convicted, and "went out one by one." Conscience-smitten, they went out from the presence of Christ as if scared by His majestic purity. This conscience for a time confounded their purposes, and abashed them with their own wickedness. *"One by one,"* they

skulked away. Ah! there is no judge so severe and crushing in his sentence as that of a guilty conscience.

III.—THAT THE GREATEST FRIEND OF SINNERS IS JESUS CHRIST.

The accusers are gone, but the accused remains with Jesus alone. Observe—

First: He declines pronouncing a judicial condemnation upon her. "*Neither do I condemn thee.*" He does not mean that He did not disapprove of her conduct and condemn her *morally*, but *judicially*. He declines to pronounce judgment. He neither possessed nor claimed any jurisdiction in civil or criminal affairs. He left the work of the magistrate for the magistrate to do. He did not come to stone bodies to death, but to save souls to life.

Secondly: He discharges her with a merciful admonition. "*Go, and sin no more.*" An expression, this, implying (1.) That she had sinned. Adultery is confessedly a crime. (2.) That He forgave her. "*Go.*" I absolve thee. (3.) That her future should be free from sin. "*Sin no more.*" Let bygones be bygones; let oblivion cover thy past; let virtue crown thy future. Thus Jesus deals with sinners. Desolate, branded, forsaken of all, He alone will stand by thee. He recriminates no penitent.

No. LI.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

(Further public teaching of Our Lord.—JOHN viii. 12—59.)

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."—viii. 12.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 12.—"*Then spake* (R. V. AGAIN THEREFORE JESUS SPAKE) *Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in* (R. V. THE) *darkness, but shall have the light of life.*" This verse should perhaps chronologically follow ver. 52 of the preceding chapter, for it is a continuation of that discourse. Some suppose that Christ here, speaking of Himself as the "Light," alludes to the large golden chandeliers in the court of the women of the temple, the light of which illuminated the whole city.

"He was," says *Dr. Farrar*, "seated at that moment in the Treasury, either some special building so called, or that part of the court of the women which contained the thirteen chests with trumpet-shaped openings called

shopherôth, into which the people, and especially the Pharisees, used to cast their gifts. In this court therefore close beside Him were two gigantic candelabra, fifty cubits high and sumptuously gilded, on the summit of which nightly during the Feast of Tabernacles lamps were lit which shed their soft light over all the city. Round these lamps the people, in their joyful enthusiasm, and even the stateliest priests and Pharisees, joined in festal dances; while, to the sound of flutes and other music, the Levites, drawn up in array on the fifteen steps which led up to the court, chanted the beautiful psalms which early received the title of 'Songs of Degrees.' In allusion to these great lamps, on which some circumstance of the moment may have concentrated the attention of the hearers, Christ ex-

claimed to them, '*I am the Light of the world.*' It was His constant plan to shape the illustrations of His discourses by those external incidents which would rouse the deepest attention and fix the words most indelibly on the memories of his hearers." Stier, however, thinks that the allusion is not to the light of the chandelier, but to that of the great sun itself. It might be so, for in the second verse of the chapter we are told that it was "early in the morning" that Christ came to the temple. The festal lights of the temple were probably extinguished, and the glorious sun was ascending the horizon and throwing his radiance upon the marble temple, and He might have meant, What that sun which is now breaking upon us is to the earth, that, and more than that, am I to the whole sinful world.

"The glorious morn from height to height
Shoots the keen arrows of the light;
And glorious in their central shower,
Palace of holiness and power,
The temple on Moriah's brow
Looks a new-risen sun below."

Elsewhere this same Evangelist calls Him the true "Light." The Logos is the true light. "All," to use the language of another, "that has really enlarged the state of intellectual truth or of moral goodness among men, all that has ever lighted any soul of man, has radiated from Him. He proclaims Himself to be the '*Light of the world,*' and the Truth; and His apostle, speaking of the illumination shed by Him upon the Church, reminds Christians that the darkness is passing, and the true Light now shineth."

HOMILETICS.

Observe, that Christ is *The Light for the World*, that is, the Light for humanity. *Κόσμος* stretches over all time, as over all space. The lights of the candelabra only irradiated the temple, or at most part of the city; however effulgent, they left the surrounding regions in darkness. But Christ as the "*Light*" is not confined to a district, but radiates a globe; not for a tribe, but for the race; not for a time, but for all times the *Light of the World*. His doctrines are fitted for universal reason, His precepts for universal conscience, His provisions for universal needs. Christ is no more the property of any particular community or tribe than the natural sun is; He belongs to the race.

I.—CHRIST AS A "LIGHT" IS WONDROUSLY REVEALING.

Light is a revealing element. When the sun goes down and darkness reigns, the whole of the beautiful world is concealed, all on ocean and on land are hidden with a veil which no eye can pierce. The sun arises, and all stands forth distinctly to view. What does Christ reveal? God, a spiritual universe, a moral government, a future state of retribution, a remedial system by which fallen humanity can be restored to the knowledge, the image, the friendship, and the enjoyment of the eternal Father. Men have appeared here in different ages and regions who have been called lights. Prophets were lights; John the Baptist was called a light; the apostles were lights; some of the heathen sages were lights; and many of the modern philosophers and scientists may be called lights. But Christ is *the* Light. Other lights are

borrowed; He is the original Fountain. Other lights only reveal dimly a few things in some narrow space; He reveals all things fully through all regions of moral being. Other lights shone a little, and, like meteors, went out; He burns on for ever—the “*Light of the world.*”

II.—CHRIST AS A “LIGHT” IS HUMANITY-GUIDING.

“*He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness.*” The sun may shine in its noontide radiance, and yet men may walk in darkness; they may shut their eyes or keep in cells or caverns. It is so with Christ. Though He is the moral Sun of the world, the millions “*walk in darkness.*” Christ is to be followed (1) *doctrinally*, (2) *ethically*, (3) *spiritually*. Men who follow Him thus will always be in the “*light.*”

III.—CHRIST AS A “LIGHT” IS SPIRITUALLY QUICKENING.

The natural sun is the fountain of life to the world; his beams quicken all. Christ is the Life of the world. “*In Him was life.*” He quickens the *intellect*, the *conscience*, the *soul*. There is no spiritual life apart from Him.

CONCLUSION. How great the obligation of the world to Christ! What would this earth be without the sun? Its condition would be wretched beyond conception; and yet it would be better off than humanity without Christ. Were all that Christ has been to humanity, and still is, to be withdrawn, into what a Stygian condition it would sink. “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!”

No. LII.

CHRIST’S SUPERHUMAN CLAIM.

“The Pharisees therefore said unto Him, Thou bearest record of Thyself; Thy record is not true,” &c.—viii. 13—19.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 13.—“*The Pharisees therefore said unto Him, Thou bearest record* (R. V. WITNESS) *of Thyself; Thy record* (R. V. WITNESS) *is not true.*” In Deut. xvii. 6 we have this Jewish law. “At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.” This law did not mean that what one man said was necessarily untrue because not confirmed by other men, for truth is independent of witnesses. Nor does it mean that a statement is necessarily true because a number of men will affirm it; for in corrupt

society it is not difficult to get almost any number of men, on certain conditions, to swear to a falsehood. This has been done over and over again in human history, and is being done the world over this very day. The intention of this law seemed to be to guard human life from the stroke of a hasty vengeance. The Pharisees, however, seem to refer to this law as a reason for rejecting what Christ had asserted concerning Himself being the “*Light of the world.*” They do not say that His evidence is insufficient because it is unsupported by a second party, but that it is not true.

Ver. 14.—“*Jesus answered and said*

unto them, Though (R. V. EVEN IF) I bear record (R. V. WITNESS) of Myself, yet My record (R. V. WITNESS) is true." This seems to contradict what our Saviour said in chapter v. 31—"If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true." He does not mean there, not true in itself; but, not true in your judgment, according to your law. Here He asserts broadly, that though He had no witness, yet His "record was true." What He said was true, though the world itself denied it. He knew it to be true. "I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell (R. V. KNOW NOT) whence I come, and whither I go." "Light," says Augustine, "both shows itself and other things. Light affords witness to itself. It opens sound eyes and is its own evidence." Then also, only he who knows can witness, and Jesus alone knew this. He, as it were, said, I know perfectly My origin, My mission, and My plans, and no human evidence could be free from any possibility of error, or have such absolute certainty as Mine. "But ye cannot tell." His origin in God and His return to God were Divine actions which surpassed all human knowledge, and could not be reached except through Divine revelation, which they would not receive.

Ver. 15.—"Ye judge after the flesh." They judged from appearances; a most deceptive rule of judgment this, for things are not what they seem. All their notions of worth, happiness, honour, success, were carnal. "I judge no man," i. e. I judge no man as you judge man. He came, "not to condemn the world," but that the world through Him might be saved. He had not even condemned the adulteress to death, but preached to her repentance, forgiveness, salvation.

Ver. 16.—"And yet (R. V. YEA AND)

if I judge, My judgment is true." "Yet if I judge," *καὶ ἐὰν κρίνω δὲ ἔγωγ*. The "I" is emphatic. "For I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me." He felt Himself so personally associated, so essentially One with His Father, that His acts as well as His testimonies had the highest confirmation.

Ver. 17.—"It is also written in your law" (R. V. YEA AND IN YOUR LAW IT IS WRITTEN). He now puts the case home to them on their own principles, that the law requires a double witness. Deut. xvii. 6; xix. 15. The emphasis is upon "your"—the law which they had made so completely their own, and in which they boasted. "That the testimony (R. V. WITNESS) of two men is true." It was in the mouth of two or three witnesses that every word should be established. This allowed of two as enough. He claims that He has two.

Ver. 18.—"I am One (R. V. HE) that bear (R. V. BEARETH) witness of Myself, and the Father that sent Me beareth witness of Me." As if He had said, According to your law, which requires a second witness, you should believe Me, for My Father is My witness.

Ver. 19.—"Then said they (R. V. THEY SAID THEREFORE) unto Him, Where is Thy Father?" This question was evidently put in derision, spoken in the same spirit as Pilate exclaimed, "What is truth?" You have no Father but an earthly one like ourselves; if so, where is He? "Jesus answered, Ye neither know Me, nor My Father: if ye had known (R. V. KNEW) Me, ye should have known (R. V. WOULD KNOW) My Father also." The same spiritual light and darkness would suffice to reveal to the mind or to hide from it at once the Father and the Son, the Sender and the Sent.

HOMILETICS.

The subject of these words is *Christ's superhuman claim*. That claim is stated in the preceding verse which we have already discussed, it is the claim of being the "*Light of the world*." Here we have this claim—

I.—DENIED BY THE PHARISEES.

"*The Pharisees therefore said unto Him, Thou bearest record of Thyself; Thy record is not true.*" We make two remarks upon their denial—

First: It was, from their view of Him, somewhat *natural*. Though it must be admitted that they had plenty of evidence to convince them that He was anyhow superhuman, they regarded Him only as a man, and therefore such words as, "*I am the Light of the world,*" falling from the lips of a mere man, would strike them as an arrogant and impious falsehood. Imagine the wisest and the best man that ever lived coming to you and uttering such words, how would you feel, and what would you say? Would you not be likely to regard him either as a brainless fanatic or as an impious impostor? You would repudiate his utterance and recoil from his presence. These Pharisees, therefore, regarding Him as they did, as a mere man, we wonder not at their statement, "*Thy record is not true.*" Another remark we make concerning their denial is—

Secondly: The reason for it was somewhat *absurd*. What was the reason? It lacked the corroboration of another witness. "*Thou bearest record of Thyself.*" We cannot accept this mere self-assertion: Thy single testimony on such a subject as this we cannot accept. We do not suppose for a moment that if all the disciples and a thousand more had stood by Christ and asserted the truth of His utterance, they would have accepted it. No number of men can make a truth more true, or turn a falsehood into truth; and hence their reason is absurd. The fact was, that their unbelief in Christ was a thing of the heart, and they were ready to formulate some reason to justify its existence. So it has ever been, and so it is now. The reasons men assign for their infidelity are not the cause of their unbelief; the cause is deeper down in their nature, down in the region of prejudices, prepossessions, likings and dislikings. Here we have this claim—

II.—VINDICATED BY CHRIST.

In His vindication, He states four things—

First: That His assertion was true, independent of any witness. "*Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.*" That He was the "*Light of the world*" was not with Him an ambitious dream, or an idea that had come to Him from the testimony of others; it was with Him an absolute fact of *personal consciousness*. "*For I know whence I came.*" As men know that they have minds because they think, feel, and resolve, Christ knew that He was the "*Light of the world.*" It was true independent of

all testimony for or against. He was conscious of it. "*Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record is true.*" In His vindication He states—

Secondly: That their judgment on the question was carnal, His was true. "*Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, My judgment is true.*" The judging of the Pharisees was without significance or weight, for it was by appearances; and appearances are ever deceptive. They judged Christ by His mere bodily aspect and mien, a poor, wan, dejected man; and therefore His declaration that He was the "*Light of the world*" would appear incredible to the last degree. He that judgeth by appearances, in a world like this, will generally judge wrongly. Thus Christ judged not. His eyes penetrated through all appearances and phenomena, clearly discerned and estimated those everlasting principles that inspire the heart of the Absolute One, and that move and manage the universe. In His vindication He states—

Thirdly: That whilst His assertion was true, independent of a witness, it was nevertheless backed by the testimony of the Eternal Father. "*It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am One that bear witness of Myself, and the Father that sent Me beareth witness of Me.*" Jesus had up to this point vindicated the validity of His own testimony. Here He asserts that His testimony was affirmed by the Highest Being—the Father. In His words here we have a conclusion *a minori ad majus*; "If, according to your law, the testimony of two men who may be deceived is sufficient, how much more the testimony of two witnesses who are highly exalted above all suspicion of error or deception." God's testimony in favour of Christ's teaching goes on through the ages, comes out in nature, in science, in human history and consciousness. In His vindication He states—

Fourthly: That they were in utter ignorance both of His Father and Himself. "Their question seemed to indicate that His Father was something Utopian, that His conceit of being God's Son was an idle fantasy, without any reality. Christ intimates to them that they, by the wicked position which they assumed towards Him, closed against themselves the way to the knowledge of His Father. Whosoever places himself in opposition to Christ can never know the Christian and only true God, the Father of Jesus Christ; for Christ is the bridge to that God Whom not to know is to be without life and without salvation. In reference to the manner of the Jews' coming, Quesnel remarks, 'All may desire and seek the knowledge of God and His mysteries in humble and sincere prayer, or with a mind full of evil design and unbelief, as we see here, and among the learned of this world.'"—*Hengstenberg*.

No. LIII.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

"These words spake Jesus (R. V. HE) in the treasury, as He taught in the temple : and no man laid hands on (R. V. TOOK) Him ; for (R. V. BECAUSE) His hour was not yet come."—viii. 20.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. — "*These words spake Jesus (R. V. HE) in the treasury, as He taught in the temple.*" Jesus is still in the temple, and continuing His discourse, notwithstanding repeated interruptions. Indeed the interruptions and interrogations, captious as most of them were, seem to stimulate utterances of truth which otherwise, perhaps, the world would never have heard. He was in that part of the temple called the "*treasury.*" This was the court of the women, in

which there were thirteen chests into which the worshippers cast their offerings. In this court there were the great chandeliers which had been lighted at the feast, and from which Jesus had just drawn an illustration of Himself as the "Light of the world." What courage Christ had, to stand in the most public place on the most public occasion, in order to utter truths that struck at once against the secular interests and religious prejudices of the people !

HOMILETICS.

The words present to us the subject of *Divine Providence*, and suggest two thoughts concerning it.

I.—THAT IT EXERTS A RESTRAINING POWER ON WICKED MEN.

"*No man laid hands on Him.*" Why ? Jewish rage was almost at its height. The Sanhedrim and many of the people were thirsting for His blood, the thirst was becoming intense. Why did they not lay hands upon Him now ? They neither lacked the disposition, the muscular power, nor the public co-operation. Why ? "*His hour was not yet come.*" There was a subtle mysterious power on their spirits, holding them back ; there was an invisible hand restraining them. In relation to this restraining power in God's moral government of the world, three remarks may be offered.

First : It is not always a matter of consciousness. Sometimes, it may be, men feel that they are reined in, that there is a curb on them, some mysterious power preventing them from doing what they most fervently desire. History presents us with monsters that have felt themselves like caged lions. But as a rule the restraining force is so subtle, so delicate, that men are unconscious of it.

Secondly : It interferes not with human freedom. A man is not free from the guilt of a wrong act because he has not the power or the opportunity to embody it. The guilt is in the desire, the volition. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." At first sight it seems morally absurd that God should restrain a man from committing a crime, and yet hold him guilty for it. The solution is here : *The crime is in the wish.*

Thirdly: It is an incalculable advantage to the race. What was in the Alexanders, the Caligulas, the Napoleons, the Lauds, and the Bonners, is for the most part in every unregenerate soul. Were there no restraining hand upon depraved hearts, all social decency, order, peace, and enjoyment would be at an end. The world would be a Pandemonium. We rejoice that He Who reins in the ocean and keeps it within bounds, holds in the passions and impulses of the depraved soul. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will." Another thought concerning Divine Providence suggested is—

II.—THAT IT HAS SETTLED PERIODS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EVENTS.

"*For His hour was not yet come.*" Christ seemed practically to recognize the fact that there was a particular hour or crisis for everything He had to do. There was an hour for the commencement of His miracles, an hour for His baptism, an hour for His death. His death was the hour of hours. "Father, the hour is come." God has appointed scenes in space, and ordained seasons in duration for all things that occur in His vast dominion. Nothing He allows to be done in one scene that is intended to occur in another; nothing in one season that is fixed for another. There is a season for everything. "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." Every orb that rolls through immensity has a point it is bound to reach, and a certain fixed period and "*hour*"; it is never behind its time. So it is, not only in the epochs and eras of human history, but in all the events of individual life. "Man's decrees and purposes," says a modern author, "often fail from the fickleness of his own mind, from his want of foresight, and from his want of power. When the period contemplated for carrying them into effect arrives, he has already, perhaps, laid them altogether aside; or, if they are still entertained, he finds, it may be, the circumstances unfavourable to the carrying out of his design. It is altogether otherwise with the designs of the Almighty. When His set time for working comes, not all the power in the universe can stay His hand. When we first look abroad, indeed, upon the busy field of human affairs, and observe the numerous actors upon the scene, all moving energetically to and fro, planning, arranging, adjusting the course of things, we may be tempted for the moment to imagine that destiny itself is in their hands. But when we have looked a little longer, and have seen all their schemes deranged, and all their contrivances thwarted, and all their devices turned to foolishness, and a result emerging the very opposite, it may be, of what they had been labouring to produce, we begin to discover that there is a power

out of sight mightier than all—One Whose purposes are “from everlasting to everlasting,” Whose “counsel shall stand, and Who will do all His pleasure.”

No. LIV.

CHRIST AND MEN.

“Then said Jesus again (R. V. HE SAID THEREFORE) unto them, I go My way (R. V. AWAY), and ye shall seek Me, and shall die in your sins (R. V. SIN): whither I go, ye cannot come.”—viii. 21.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 21.—
“And ye shall die in your sins” (R. V. IN YOUR SIN). It does not mean, you shall die *for* your sins, but in your sins, in your moral guiltiness. “If they persisted in their unbelief

and rejection of Him, they could have no salvation, they must die in their sin, because they rejected the one Saviour from the power and curse of sin.”

HOMILETICS.

The subject of this verse is *Christ and Men*; and there are three things here worthy of attention.

I.—THE WITHDRAWMENT OF CHRIST FROM MEN.

First: Christ had a “way.” “*I go My way.*” By His “way” He undoubtedly means His way through the Cross up to His Father’s presence and His native heavens. As if He had said, I have a “way” clearly defined, though rugged and distressing in some parts. In that “way” I go, in it I shall not pause, and from it I shall not swerve. What a “way” was His! It will be the study of eternity.

Secondly: Christ pursued His “way” voluntarily. “*I go.*” You cannot force Me. I am not the victim of coercion, I am free. (1.) The voluntariness of Christ’s death is no extenuation of the guilt of His murderers. “The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!” (2.) The voluntariness of Christ’s death is the glory of His history. Why has Christ’s death the power, not only to save humanity, but to thrill and charm the universe? Because it was *free*. “I have power to lay down My life, and power to take it up again.”

A more terrible calamity cannot happen to men, than the withdrawal of Christ from their midst. A greater calamity far than if the sun were to withdraw from the heavens, and leave them in sackcloth. There is a sense in which Christ withdraws from impenitent men now. Another thing here worthy of attention is—

II.—THE FRUITLESS SEEKING OF CHRIST BY MEN.

“*Ye shall seek Me, and shall die in your sins.*” This is a repetition of what Jesus had before said in the previous chapter. “Ye shall seek Me, but shall not find Me.” When I am gone, and the

judgments of heaven will descend on your country, you will be seeking Me, but you will not find Me; you will have filled up the measure of your iniquity, "the things that belong to your peace will be hid from your eyes."

First: This fruitless seeking is possible. There is a *fruitless* seeking for Christ. The day of grace closes with some men even while they are in the world. In the judgment He will be earnestly sought, but will not be found. "Many shall say unto Me on that day," &c. &c.

Secondly: This fruitless seeking is lamentable. "*Ye shall die in your sins.*" Sin is like quicksand, the man who walks on it must ultimately sink and be lost. "It sometimes happens on the coast of Britain or Scotland that a person walking on the sand will suddenly find a difficulty in walking. The shore is like pitch, to which the soles of his feet cling. The coast appears perfectly dry, but the footprints that he leaves are immediately filled with water. Nothing distinguishes the sand which is solid from that which is not. He passes on, unaware of his danger. Suddenly he sinks. He looks at his feet: the sand covers them. He wishes to turn back, but with every effort sinks more deeply. With indescribable terror he finds he is involved in a quicksand. He throws down his burden; but it is already too late. The slow burial of hours continues; the sand reaches to his waist, to his chest, to his neck; now only his face is visible. He cries; the sand fills his mouth, and all is silent." What a striking emblem of the danger of sin! Another thing worthy of attention here is—

III.—THE ETERNAL SEPARATION OF CHRIST FROM MEN.

"*Whither I go, ye cannot come.*" The separation will be complete and irreversible. "*Ye cannot come.*" Christ had said this before (vii. 34), and He refers to it again (xiii. 33). So that to Him the words had a terrible meaning. More terrible words than these could not be sounded in human ears, "*Ye cannot come.*" It means incorrigible depravity, hopeless misery. Separation from Christ is hell. The commission of every sin contributes to the construction of the impassable gulf.

No. LV.

ASPECTS OF UNBELIEF.

"Then said the Jews (R. V. THE JEWS THEREFORE SAID), Will He kill Himself? because (R. V. THAT) He saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. And He said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not (R. V. EXCEPT YE BELIEVE) that I am He, ye shall die in your sins."—viii. 22—24.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 22.—evidently," says Dr. Brown, "saw "*Will He kill Himself?*" "They more in His words than when He

spake thus before (vii. 34), for their question now is more malignant and scornful." They malignantly hint that He was going to commit what they considered one of the greatest crimes, viz. suicide, a crime which, though the Greeks and Romans thought little of, was regarded by the Jews with supreme horror.

Ver. 23.—"*And He said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.*" By these words He seemed to imply that they could not go, as He had said, to Him because

they belonged to different worlds. They were "*from beneath.*" Not perhaps in a physical and local sense, but in a moral sense. Their spirits were down in the infernal regions of guilt, prejudice, and profanity. On the other hand, He was from above, up in the realms of Divine purity and love. Because of this, He said, "*Whither I go, ye cannot come.*" We have nothing morally in common.

Ver. 24.—"*I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am He.*" "*He*" is not in the original. ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι, I am.

HOMILETICS.

In these words we have *Aspects of unbelief.* Here is,—

I.—THE PERVERSITY OF UNBELIEF.

"*Then said the Jews, Will He kill Himself?*" They were either sincere or insincere in this interrogative: in either case the perverseness of their hearts is manifest. If they saw the meaning of Christ, they were perverse in giving it this turn; if they did not, they were perverse in being so dull of comprehension, for His words were plain enough. It is evermore the characteristic of unbelief, that it perverts truth. "If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." We have here—

II.—THE DEGRADATION OF UNBELIEF.

"*He said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above,*" &c.* As if He had said, You will not understand Me, and cannot come to Me; because you live in a different moral region. Observe—

First: The world in which a man lives is his character. The habitual thoughts, paramount desires, leading purposes of the soul, is the world of the soul. Thus, every soul builds up its own world. It creates for itself either a Gehenna or an Eden.

Secondly: The character of one man may be so different to another as to constitute different worlds. As soon may the earth enter into the orbit of Mars or Jupiter, and live and flourish there, as a bad character enter into the orbit and live in the presence of a character that is Christly and pure. These characters have different centres, different orbits, the one *cannot* come into the other. This is what Christ seems to mean, and this is a profound truth. We have here—

* See Germ, p. 231.

III.—THE DISASTROUSNESS OF UNBELIEF.

"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins." * Mark—(1.) The *inevitable*. Every man must die: this is assumed. "It is appointed for all men once to die." What is it to die? Ah, what? (2.) The *optional*. The option is this: whether you should "*die in your sins*" or not. To die in sin is very terrible. To die in confusion, anguish, self-crimination, black despair. But, thank God! you need not "*die in your sins*." *Believe!*

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. XXXII.

CHRIST'S MORAL ELEVATION.

"Ye are from beneath; I am from above."—viii. 23.

This expression is susceptible of two interpretations: the one, physical or local; the other, ethical or spiritual. Does Christ mean "*from above*" in a *local* sense? Does He mean that He came from the heavenly world, and that they—the Jews—had their origin on the earth? It is true that Christ had a pre-existence; but it is not true that men had no heavenly origin, that they grew out of the earth. This is modern materialism. All human souls—we take it—as truly come from God as Christ came from the bosom of the Father to this earth. In a *moral* sense we must take the words. The language applies to *character*: its elevation and degradation. His moral character was from above; it was lofty, Divine: the character that makes heaven, and is God-like. On the other hand, their character was "*beneath*." It was mean, selfish, low as hell. The word "*above*" is frequently used in a moral sense. Paul says, "Seek those things that are above,"—that is, not things that are socially or locally above, but that are spiritually elevated. Truth, love, &c.—these are the elevated things in God's universe. Indeed, the next clause sustains this view: "Ye are of this world; I am not of this world." In moral character Christ was as *distant* from His age, the Jews, and all unregenerate mankind as heaven from hell. Paul says He was "separate from sinners." Concerning this distance we make three remarks—

I.—IT WAS MANIFESTED IN HIS EARTHLY LIFE.

First: It was seen in the conduct of the Jews in relation to Him. The evangelical record abounds with many striking incidents illustrative of the felt disparity between Christ's character and the character of the people with whom He lived. He enters a synagogue at Nazareth, His native place. All there knew His humble pedigree, and regarded Him as one of their peasant townsmen; but there was such a moral originality of goodness about

* See Germ, p. 234.

Him, that, after He had closed the book He read from, "the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him" (Luke iv. 14—27). A Roman centurion—"a man under authority"—felt the same awe in the presence of Jesus; felt that between him and the Peasant there was a distance that made him humble; and he said, "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof!" (Matt. viii. 5—13.) Those who sold and bought in the temple felt this, and struck with terror, they hurried off (Matt. xxi. 12). The Scribes and Pharisees who accused the woman taken in adultery, could not stand before the unearthly purity of Christ's character, and they went out one by one (John viii. 1—11). The Roman ruffians who came into the garden of Gethsemane to take Him by force, felt it; and they fell as dead men before Him. Pilate felt it, struggled against it, but it overwhelmed him at last. The spectators of the Crucifixion felt it. Luke tells us that "all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned." Even Peter, after he had partially assimilated to Him, declares it: "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Whence arose this felt distance? It cannot be accounted for—(1.) On the ground of *miraculous manifestation*; His miracles were attractive. Nor (2.) On the ground of social *superiority*: He was known as a humble peasant. Nor (3.) On the ground of His *non-sociality*. He mingled with the people. It was simply distance of character. His incorruptible truthfulness, His immaculate purity, His calm reverence, His warm and overflowing benevolence, struck them with awe.

Secondly: It was seen in the conduct of Christ in relation to the people. He felt, He manifested, a moral loneliness. In the crowd He felt solitary. "Of the people there was none with Him." They had nothing in common with Him morally. What they honoured, He despised; what they loved, He hated; what they pursued, His whole nature recoiled from. All their idols were to Him abomination. Hence, He only felt akin to those who had to some extent kindred sympathy. "My mother and brethren are these which hear the Word of God and do it." Hence, too, His frequent withdrawal from the people to pour out in lonely solitude His sorrows to the everlasting Father. And in His lonely hours He bewails the moral character of His age: "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee." He was morally above them. They were mere flickering lamps, dim and sooty; He rolled as a bright star above them. Concerning Christ's distance from sinners, notice—

II.—IT WAS DEMONSTRATIVE OF HIS REAL DIVINITY.

Whence came such a character as this? *Intellectually* it has been proved over and over again, that there was nothing, either in

the Jewish or Gentile mind, to give rise to such a doctrinal system as that propounded by Jesus of Nazareth. His revelation of God's love transcended all human conception. "Eye hath not seen; ear hath not heard." And, *morally*, it is equally evident there was nothing in His age to produce such a character. How could immaculate purity come out of an age of corruption—incorruptible truth come out of a world of falsehood—self-sacrificing love out of a world of selfishness? Men's characters are formed on the principle of imitation; but Christ's character could not be thus formed. He had no perfect form to imitate. Even the best of the patriarchs and the holiest of the prophets were imperfect. How can you account for the existence of such a character as His? Tell me not that it came of the earth. Do grapes grow on thorns? Did the flaming pillar in the wilderness grow out of the sand? His perfect moral excellence was universally felt, not because there was no effort employed to discover imperfections in Him. The keen eye of His age was always on the watch, in order, if possible, to descry some moral defect. And Pilate, who had every facility for knowing Him, and every motive for condemning Him, said, "I find no fault in Him." And this moral excellence, too, was retained to the last, not because He was not assailed by temptation. Never came the great tempter to any man in a more powerful form than he came to Christ in the wilderness. How then is it possible to account for such a character as this? Only on the principle that He was indeed the "Son of God." Concerning Christ's distance from sinners, notice—

III.—IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO HIS REDEEMERSHIP.

Had He not been thus morally "*above*" His age and above mankind, He had lacked the qualification to redeem souls. Holiness has the power to convict, to renovate, to sanctify, and to save. A man who is one with sinners, morally standing on the same platform, can never save them. Christ has regenerated millions, and will regenerate millions more, because of the *holiness* of His character. Because He is "*above*" them, He rolls His moral thunders down to alarm the careless; pours His sunbeams to quicken the dead; rains His fertilizing showers to make moral deserts blossom as the rose. As the well-being of the earth depends upon the heavens, so the spiritual progress of humanity depends upon that Character that is stretched over us like the sunny skies.

CONCLUSION. The subject—

First: Predicates the way to true elevation. Men are endowed with aspirations; they have an instinct for progress, an inborn desire to rise. But what altitudes should they scale to reach true dignity? Commerce, literature, scholarship, war? No; from all

these heights man must fall—fall like Lucifer, the son of the morning. The altitude of imitating Christ is that which conducts to glory. Seek the things “*above*.” Press on to assimilation to that Character that is above you. It will always be above you, and so far it meets the unbounded moral aspirations of your heart. “Be ye holy, even as God is holy.” Christ’s character is everlastingly saying to you, “Come up hither.” The subject—

Secondly: Reveals the only way by which we can regenerate the world. Keep at a moral distance from mankind. Let the people amongst whom we live, feel that we are morally above them. In this age, what is called the Church is morally so identified with the spirit that moves the world, that it is on the same moral plane as the market, and the theatre. The subject—

Thirdly: Presents motives for the highest gratitude. The grandest fact in the history of our planet is, that a perfect moral character has been here, wearing our nature. Though His physical personality is gone, His character is here still, and ever will be.

No. XXXIII.

THE GREATEST CALAMITY.

“Die in your sins.”—viii. 24.

These words imply—

I.—THAT TO DIE IN ONE’S SINS IS THE GREATEST OF CALAMITIES.

To *die* is a terribly solemn thing. Solemn, for it involves the separation from the home, the business, the acquaintance, the world, and the very body itself;—solemn, for it involves an introduction into a mysterious, untried, spiritual state of retribution. But “*to die in sins*,” this adds immeasurably to its solemnity. Sin is the *sting* of death. To die in one’s sins, what does it mean?

First: It means to die having *misused this life with all its blessings*. The grand purpose of life is the cultivation of a holy character; for this physical blessings are given—health, time, the influences of nature. All *social* pleasures, and all happy interchanges of thought, feeling, and soul; all *mental* blessings also—literature, science, poetry, schools, &c. All *redemptive* blessings, moreover—the Gospel, with its soul-saving appliances. He who dies in “*his sins*” has *abused* all.

Secondly: It means to die *with all the conditions of misery*. Conflicting passions, a tormenting conscience, a dreaded God, foreboding anguish. If this is not hell, what is it? To “*die in sins*”—why, better a thousand times to die in a pauper’s hovel, or in a martyr’s tortures, than to die in sin. The words imply—

II.—THAT UNBELIEF IN CHRIST RENDERS THIS GREATEST OF CALAMITIES INEVITABLE.

"If you believe not that I am He," &c. It is easy to show, on philosophical grounds, that belief in Christ, as the Revealer of God, is essential to the deliverance of man from the guilt, the power, and the consequence of his sins. Three facts may be sufficient to indicate this.

First: Deliverance from sins requires the awaking in the soul of a *supreme* affection for God. Love to God is the only expulsive power. This only can destroy the "old man," &c.

Secondly: A *supreme* affection for God requires a certain *revelation* of Him. In what aspects must the Eternal appear to man before this love can be awakened within him? I answer, He must appear *personally, forgivingly, and sublimely perfect*.

Thirdly: This certain revelation of God, which is essential to love, is *nowhere* but in Jesus Christ. He alone reveals God in aspects to awaken this love. He brings close to the eye of the heart a *personal, forgiving, perfect* God. Belief in Him, therefore, is essential to a deliverance of the soul from sin. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

NO. LVI.

CHRIST'S TEACHING.

"Then said they (R. V. THEY SAID THEREFORE) unto Him, Who art Thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said (R. V. THAT WHICH I HAVE ALSO SPOKEN) unto you from the beginning. I have many things to say (R. V. SPEAK) and to judge of (R. V. CONCERNING) you: but (R. V. HOWBEIT) He that sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him (R. V. AND THE THINGS WHICH I HEARD FROM HIM THESE SPEAK I UNTO THE WORLD). They understood (R. V. PERCEIVED) not that He spake to them of the Father."—viii. 25—27.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 25.—*"Then said they unto Him, Who art Thou?"* A fair and very important question this, as it stands—a question for the race. But what was the spirit that inspired it in this case? Was it an earnest desire to ascertain the truth, as it was in Paul's case when he put the question, "Lord, who art Thou?" No. Jesus had told them oftentimes who He was. It is rather in the spirit of derision that the question is here put. *"And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning."* τὴν ἀρχὴν ὅτε καὶ λαλῶ ὑμῖν. "This clause is in the

original somewhat obscure, and has been variously rendered and much discussed. But the sense given in our version seems the true one, and has on the whole the best support." Dr. Davidson renders the clause, "Altogether such as I am telling you." The idea is, undoubtedly, "that which I have told you all along from the commencement I am." "Jesus does not wish to make the reply, 'I am the Messiah,' because they adhered so strongly to a dead positive idea; and as they would not find this verified in Him, they would only have been the more hardened against Him. He

refers them therefore to His discourses. First of all in these discourses was He to be recognized."—*De Wette*.

Ver. 26.—"*I have many things to say and to judge of you: but He that sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him.*" "The sense is somewhat obscure, but is perhaps best conveyed

in the paraphrase of *Bloomfield*, 'I could say much more in reference to you and your unbelief, but I shall content Myself with declaring that, as I am sent from the great Father of truth, so what I publicly aver is from Him and therefore must be true.'

HOMILETICS.

These words suggest a few thoughts concerning *Christ's Teaching*. Notice—

I.—IT IS CONSISTENT.

"*The same as I said unto you from the beginning.*" Probably His interrogators desired that He should make a proclamation concerning Himself inconsistent with His former utterances: if so, they were disappointed. All that Christ said concerning Himself is beautifully consistent. There is no real discrepancy, not a shadow of contradiction; it is a beautiful whole. All His utterances concerning Himself meet in Him as the rays meet in the sun. This consistency is very remarkable when we consider two things.

First: The various and often trying circumstances under which He spoke. His utterances often came forth under intense suffering and great provocation, and often in answers to men who did their utmost to make Him contradict Himself.

Secondly: The diversity in the minds and circumstances of those who reported His utterances. How different in faculties, taste, culture, habits, circumstances, and angles of observation were His four biographers; and yet their reports agree. These words suggest another thought concerning *Christ's Teaching*—

II.—IT IS PROGRESSIVE.

"*I have many things to say and to judge of you.*" Christ suited His teaching to the capacities and characters of His hearers. In His mind there was an Infinite treasury of truth. But His administration of it was *gradual*. Indeed, no finite intelligence could take in all that was in the mind of Christ: it would take eternity to unfold all His wonderful thoughts. Christ has been teaching John for millenniums, but He has "*many things to say*" to him yet.

First: The progressiveness of His teaching supplies a motive to stimulate human inquiry. Christ will teach you according to your capacity. The more you learn of Him the more He will teach you.

Secondly: The progressiveness of His teaching shows His suitability as a Teacher for mankind. Men have naturally a craving for knowledge; and the more they know the more intense

the craving becomes. They therefore want a teacher of unbounded resources. Another thought suggested concerning *Christ's Teaching* is—

III.—IT IS DIVINE.

"*He that sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him.*" He taught, not human things, but the things of God—absolute realities. "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten of the Father, He hath declared Him." The things He taught were things concerning God, things relating to the Divine government, character, claims. The last thought suggested concerning *Christ's Teaching* is—

IV.—IT IS NOT ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD.

"*They understood not that He spake to them of the Father.*" In this they represent an enormous class of men in every age, who understand not Christ, who misrepresent, misinterpret Him.

CONCLUSION. Have we put to Christ in earnest the question, "*Who art Thou?*" and have we received in docility, faith, and love back into our own hearts an answer from Him? Do we know Him, "*Whom to know is life eternal?*" Do we know Him Whom flesh and blood cannot reveal to us?

No. LVII.

CHRIST FORECASTING HIS DEATH AND DESTINY.

"Then said Jesus (R. V. JESUS THEREFORE SAID) unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My (R. V. THE) Father hath taught Me, I speak these things. And He that sent Me is with Me: the Father (R. V. FOR HE) hath not left Me alone; for I do always those (R. V. THE) things that please (R. V. ARE PLEASING TO) Him."—viii. 28, 29.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Vers. 28, 29.—"*Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man.*" This is the plainest intimation He had yet given in public of the manner and the authors of His death. "*And that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things.*" That is, they should find out, or have sufficient evidence, how true was all He said, though they would be far from owning it. "*And He that sent Me is*

with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him." "To you who gnash upon Me with your teeth, and frown down all open appearance for Me, I seem to stand uncoun tenanced and alone; but I have a sympathy and support transcending all human applause; I came hither to do My Father's will, and in the doing of it have not ceased to please Him; therefore is He ever by Me with His approving smile, His cheering words, His supporting arm."—D. Brown, D.D.

HOMILETICS.

In these verses we have *Christ forecasting His death and destiny*; and in relation to the language which He here employs we offer four remarks.

I.—HIS LANGUAGE REVEALS HIS SUBLIME HEROISM IN THE PROSPECT OF A TERRIBLE DEATH.

"*When ye have lifted up the Son of man.*" He refers undoubtedly to His elevation on the cross, where He was to be nailed as a malefactor between two thieves. On another occasion He speaks of His crucifixion in a similar way, "The lifted up," &c. His death by crucifixion was—

First: The culmination of human wickedness. Human wickedness could not reach a higher point than the putting to death of the Son of God. It was—

Secondly: The culmination of human suffering. The crucifixion involved ignominy, insult, cruelty, torture. Yet how calmly Christ speaks of this terrible death! "He endured the cross, despising the shame." With what elevated calmness and ineffable composure of soul He speaks of the terrible event which awaited Him! There was no faltering note, no syllable of complaint, no ripple of perturbation. He faced the cross with all its horrors, and felt no dismay.

II.—HIS LANGUAGE EXPRESSES HIS UNSHAKEN FAITH IN THE TRIUMPH OF HIS CAUSE.

"*Then shall ye know that I am He.*"

First: He was not discouraged by apparent failure. To the world, His life, ending in crucifixion, would appear a stupendous failure. To Him, however, it was a success. His death was a seed falling into the earth.

Secondly: He did not despair of man's improvability. He believed that there would come a reaction in men's minds concerning Him. When He was gone, they would begin to think, recognize, and give Him credit for excellency, which they did not when He was among them.

Thirdly: He was not doubtful of ultimate success. He saw the day of Pentecost; saw the results of apostolic labours; witnessed the triumph of His truth through all subsequent ages; at last, saw His character moulding the race to His own ideal. Christ is certain of success.

III.—HIS LANGUAGE IMPLIES A PRINCIPLE OF CONDUCT COMMON IN ALL HISTORY.

The principle is this, that good men, undervalued in life, are appreciated when gone. We see this principle in the *family*. Members of a family may live together for years; and through the infirmity of tempers, the clashing of tastes, and the collision of opinion, excellences may be entirely overlooked. One dies,—the father, mother, brother, sister,—and then attributes of goodness

come up to the memory of the survivors that never appeared before. We see it in the *State*. Public men, devoted to the common good, and loyal to conscience, so clash with popular opinions and prejudices, that they are regarded with odium, and denounced with bitterness—they die, and their virtues emerge, and fill the social atmosphere with fragrance—Burke, Hume, Cobden, are amongst the illustrations and examples of this. We see it in the *Church*. A minister labours for years amongst a people. He may be too thoughtful to be appreciated by the thoughtless, too honest to bow to current prejudices; so that, during his life, his labours pass unacknowledged and unrequited. He dies. His memoir is written; his discourses are printed; he has a moral epiphany. It was so with Arnold of Rugby and Robertson of Brighton.

IV.—HIS LANGUAGE INDICATES A CONSCIOUSNESS OF HIS PECULIAR RELATION TO THE ETERNAL FATHER.

“As My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things. And He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him.”

First: He was the *Pupil* of the Father. *“As My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things.”* The ideas, principles, purposes, that I have, I have derived from the Infinite Father. This you will know when I am gone. You will learn after My crucifixion that My teaching is Divine.

Secondly: He was the *Companion* of the Father. *“He that hath sent Me is with Me.”* Though He has sent Me, I am not distant from Him, He is with Me. He has not left Me alone. He is with Me, not only in sympathy and aim, but in loving, close, personal intercourse. *“I and My Father are one.”*

Thirdly: He was the *Servant* of the Father. *“I do always those things that please Him.”* I am His “beloved Son, in Whom He is well pleased.” Whatever I do meets with His approval. He delights in My services for humanity. Though I displease you, I do *“always those things that please Him.”*

CONCLUSION.

First: This subject reveals the sublime uniqueness of Christ. Who, amongst all the millions of men that have appeared on the earth, could use such language as this? Who could forecast such a terrible future with such perfect accuracy and sublime calmness of soul? Who could claim such a relationship to the Infinite Father as He proclaims for Himself? Christ stands alone, sublimely alone in the history of humanity. As our solar system has but one sun, our universe has but one Christ.

Secondly: This subject suggests the Christ-verifying force of human history. What Christ here predicts, history has established.

Through His crucifixion ever-increasing multitudes of men have been convinced that He is the true Messiah, the Messenger, the Revealer, the Companion of the everlasting Father.

In connection with what is said here and elsewhere about Christ, the remarks of Stuart Mill, who was considered by some to be an infidel, will prove interesting.

"About the life and sayings of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality, combined with profundity of insight, which, if we abandon the idle expectation of finding scientific precision where something very different was aimed at, must place the Prophet of Nazareth, even in the estimation of those who have no belief in His inspiration, in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast. When His pre-eminent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer and martyr to that mission who ever existed upon earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching upon this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor even now would it be easy even for an unbeliever to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete than the endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life. When to this we add that to the conception of the rational sceptic it remains a possibility that Christ was actually what He supposed Himself to be,—not God, for He never made the smallest pretension to that character, and would probably have thought such a pretension as blasphemous as it seemed to the men who condemned Him,—but a man charged with a special, express, and unique commission from God, to lead man to virtue and truth, we may well conclude that the influences of religion on the character, which will remain after rational criticism has done its utmost against the evidences of religion, are well worth preserving, and that what we lack in direct strength as compared with those of a firmer belief is more than compensated by the greater truth and rectitude of the morality they sanction."

LVIII.

GENUINE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP.

"As He spake these words (R. v. THINGS), many believed on Him. Then said Jesus (R. v. JESUS THEREFORE SAID) to those Jews which believed on (R. v. HAD BELIEVED) Him, If ye continue (R. v. ABIDE) in My word, then are ye (R. v. TRULY) My disciples indeed (R. v. OMITTS); and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."—viii. 30—32.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 30.—*"As He spake these words, many believed on Him."* "This is not to be wondered at. The wonder is, that such unearthly language, spoken with such calm majesty, did not strike conviction into the hearts of all."

Ver. 31.—*"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed."* "Continue," that is, not merely "continue to believe," as Lange has it, but according to the spirit of the Word, and in

obedience with the word which He spoke. A mere hearing of the Word, or a deep passing interest in the Word, or an intellectual belief in the Word, or an occasional devotion to the Word, will not constitute genuine discipleship, but a practical continuance in its spirit and aim.

Ver. 32.—*"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* "He that doeth the will of God shall know of the doctrine." "If they proved steadfast in their discipleship, they would attain to new

and exalted views of truth, which would emancipate them from their present errors and sins. For it is eminently the property of truth, to make men free in all respects—physic-

ally, socially, civilly, and spiritually. The reference here, however, is undoubtedly to the freedom which the Gospel imparts from the bondage of sin.^b

HOMILETICS.

The subject of these words is *Genuine Christian Discipleship*. Three remarks are suggested concerning it.

I.—IT GROWS OUT OF A PRACTICAL CONTINUANCE IN CHRIST'S WORD.

"*If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed.*" "My Word." What is that? It is no small thing. Its dimensions are infinite; it embraces all that is true in the words of prophets and apostles. It has in it a philosophy that comprehends all that is true in all the philosophies of the world,—a morality that embraces all that is just and righteous in all the laws and ethics of humanity. This "*Word*" is large enough to supply thought, inspiration, and direction for the loftiest of created geniuses. It takes God Himself into it. Now, to be a genuine disciple, you must "*abide in this Word*;" it must be the home, the dwelling-place of your soul.

(1.) There are some who regard themselves as disciples, who never enter it. They live in its *letter*, they never penetrate its spirit, itself. The letter of this "*Word*" is the mere rough materials of which the buildings are composed, not the spacious, elegant, and costly furnished rooms.

(2.) There are some who enter it, only as passing visitors. Like travellers in an hotel, they only enter one apartment, and tarry only as brief sojourners. They do not dwell in this house of the Lord. They do not visit its unnumbered apartments, and inspect its countless treasures. Neither of these classes are genuine disciples. The genuine disciple is he who continues in Christ's Word—continues just as the devoted merchant continues in the commercial spirit, as the devoted artist continues in the spirit of his art. To abide in Christ's Word, is to abide in Him: and if any man abide in Christ he is a "new creature." "Old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."

Another remark concerning genuine Christian discipleship is—

II.—IT QUALIFIES FOR A RIGHT APPRECIATION OF DIVINE TRUTH.

"*Ye shall know the truth.*" The man who continues in Christ's Word gets the faculty for discerning and appreciating *truth* in the world of falsehoods, *reality* in the world of shams. Truth is reality, and reality is covered by a thick veil in the whole world of

unregenerate men. Men walk in a vain show, they live in fiction. Ever since the Fall, the father of lies rules the world. Lies are its imperial laws. Men's ideas of religion, happiness, power, are all fictitious, and not in accord with eternal realities. Now, the man who *continues* in Christ's "*Word*," acquires the faculty of taking off the mask from things and seeing them as they are. He accepts what Christ taught—that happiness consists not in what man *has*, but what he *is*; that greatness is in not commanding, but serving; that worship is not an occasional service, but the living spirit. Now, to be in conscious contact and loving sympathy with reality, is essential to our well-being. All falsehoods, social, political, religious, intellectual, are as fleeting as the visions of the night, as shifting as the clouds. Souls want realities—want substances to embrace, rocks to stand upon, eternal principles of truth, beauty, and goodness as their living elements. They can only live, grow, and flourish behind the shifting scenes of phenomena, upon those immutable principles that lie at the root of all things.

Another remark concerning genuine Christian discipleship is—

III.—IT ENSURES THE ENJOYMENT OF PERFECT LIBERTY.

"*Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*" "*Make you free.*" (1.) Free from the bondage of *fashions*. The millions are the mere serfs of fashion; fashion is their iron master. But the man who knows *reality*, sets fashion at defiance. (2.) Free from the bondage of *false opinions*. Prejudices built on falsehoods are amongst the greatest despots of the soul. The man who knows reality hurls them from their throne and breaks out into intellectual liberty. (3.) Free from the bondage of *animal propensities*. The flesh rules the millions who have no convictions of morality; "they are carnally sold unto sin." The man who *knows the truth* treads down his lusts and enthrones his conscience. (4.) Free from mere *forms and ceremonies*. Forms and ceremonies in social life, as well as religion, hold thoughtless millions in subjection. But a man who knows the truth becomes independent of all appearances.

CONCLUSION. Who would not be a genuine disciple of Christ? A sublimer character know I not than this. No one sustains a position so truly honourable and blessed as this. What a contrast between conventional Christianity and genuine Christian discipleship! The one is a huge falsehood, the other a sublime reality: the one subjects the soul to a miserable slavery, the other lifts it into the "glorious liberty of the sons of God."

"He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves besides."

No. LIX.

MORAL BONDAGE.

"They answered (R. V. UNTO) Him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never (R. V. HAVE NEVER YET BEEN) in bondage to any man: how sayest Thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever (R. V. EVERY ONE THAT) committeth sin is the servant (R. V. BONDSERVANT) of sin. And the servant (R. V. BONDSERVANT) abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth (R. V. FOR) ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."—viii. 33—36.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 33.—*"They answered Him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man."* Here the hostile part of His audience interrupts Him in the kind and instructive words which He addresses to those who have believed. *"We be Abraham's seed."* This was the darling idea of the Jews. Ever did they boast of their descent from the great Father of the Faithful. *"We were never in bondage to any man."* An utterance, this, revealing their characteristic pride and falsehood too. *"Never in bondage to any man!"* Were they not slaves in Egypt, captives in Babylon? and were not the Romans now their masters?

Ver. 34.—*"Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."* *"Whosoever"* (πᾶς ὁ), every one that does sin. Sin is not here to be taken as a simple act, but as a habit, a course of life. He conveys to them the idea that He did not mean political servitude, but moral; assures them that sin is the real tyrant of man.

Ver. 35.—*"And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever."* "The Saviour here alludes to a common occurrence in life, by which he illustrates this moral truth of the slavery of the wrong-doer. A slave has no permanent residence in a family, but is liable at any time to be sold or sent away; whereas a son is the heir, and therefore remains stationary. Only those, therefore, that are God's genuine children can inherit His promised blessings." *Dr. Brown's* remark on this verse is good. "A very glorious statement, the sense of which may be thus expressed: 'And if your connection with the family of

God be that of BONDSERVANTS, ye have no natural tie to the house; your tie is essentially *uncertain and precarious*. But the Son's relationship to the Father is a *natural and essential* one; it is an indefeasible tie; his abode in it is *perpetual and of right*.' That is my relationship, my tie. If then ye would have your connection with God's family made *real, rightful, permanent*, ye must by the Son be *manumitted, and adopted* as sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty." In this sublime statement there is no doubt a subordinate allusion to Gen. xxi. 10, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." Compare Gal. iv. 2—30.

Ver. 36.—*"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."* There is a supposed allusion here to an ancient custom by which a son had the power to liberate the slave in the household. *"Ye shall be free indeed"* (οἰκία); clearly the house or household of God. "If your character, your relationship to the master of the house, be that of slaves, there is no indissoluble bond connecting you with him, and therefore your abode in his house is precarious. The condition of a son is widely different; his relationship to the master is indefeasible, his abode in the house perpetual and of right. If, then, the Son, the Heir, sets you free, and that by adoption, so that you become the recognized children of the family, you become free indeed, partakers even of His character and privileges (Gen. xlv. 1). The allusions to the manumission of slaves and adoption of strangers into families, practised among the Romans, need no explanation."—*Webster and Wilkinson*.

HOMILETICS.

The great subject of these words is *Moral bondage*; and they suggest three facts concerning it—

I.—THAT THE SUBJECTS OF MORAL BONDAGE ARE UNCONSCIOUS OF IT.

In the midst of Christ's address on freedom, the hostile Jews broke in and exclaimed, "*We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man*;" as if they had said, "Why talk of freedom to us? we are free men." But, in truth, they were slaves; and to the eye of Christ they were in the most miserable captivity.

It is common here in England to hear men boast of *religious liberty*, who have no religion. Some of the most strenuous professional advocates of religious liberty are manifestly destitute of that spirit of reverence for the Infinite and charity to all men, which constitutes the very essence of true Christliness. These men will say that they have never been "*in bondage to any man*," when in truth they are "*in bondage*" to their own prejudices, exclusiveness, love of fame or gain. Nor is it uncommon to hear men boasting of *civil freedom*, who are moral slaves. Men who are under the absolute tyranny of their own lusts and greed, who are even governed, as Carlyle says, "by a pot of heavy wet" and a clay pipe, peel out in thunderous chorus,—"*Britons never shall be slaves*." In truth, the worst part of this moral bondage is, that men are *unconscious* of their thralldom. Hence they are mere creatures of circumstances. Like rotten logs of wood on the river, they are being borne down to the great oceanic future. Hence their inner man, their moral *ego*, is "*carnally sold unto sin*." This unconsciousness is the more sad because it precludes any aspiration or effort for self-manumission; and it is only self-effort that can liberate. Other men may deliver the prisoner from his dungeon, or the domestic slave from his tyrant, or the political serf from his despot; but no one can deliver him from bondage but himself—

"He who would be free, himself must strike the blow."

Another fact suggested by the text in relation to moral bondage is—

II.—THAT THE SUBJECTS OF MORAL BONDAGE ARE THE AUTHORS OF IT.

"*Whosoever committeth sin is a servant of sin*." "*Whosoever*,"—each one. It is not the sin of another man that makes me a slave, it is my own. Solomon says, "that his own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins." And Paul says, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." "Vice is

imprisonment," says *Shakspeare*. This is verily so: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil." Every sin a man commits, forges a new link in the chain to manacle his soul, creates a new despot, for he strengthens the reins of the despot within him. The longer a man pursues a certain course of conduct, whether it be good or bad, the more wedded he becomes to it, and the less power he has of abandoning it. Every time an action is repeated, a new web has been woven binding us to it. Habit is a cord; it is strengthened with every action. At first it is as fine as silk, and can be broken with but little effort. As it proceeds it becomes a cable, strong enough to hold a man-of-war steady amidst boisterous billows and furious winds. Habit is a momentum; it increases with motion. At first a child's hand can obstruct the progress. As the motion increases it gets a power difficult for an army of giants to overcome. Habit is a river. At its head spring you can arrest its progress with ease, and turn it in any direction you please; but as it approaches the ocean it defies opposition, and rolls with a thunderous majesty into the sea.

Another fact suggested by the passage in relation to moral bondage is—

III.—THAT THE SUBJECTS OF MORAL BONDAGE CAN BE DELIVERED FROM IT.

"*If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*" How does Christ make the soul "free?" This question may be answered in many ways, and in many ways it is answered. Some answers are wise, and some are foolish. The answer most satisfactory to my intellect is this: *By generating in the human heart supreme love to the Supremely Good.* It is a law of mind, to have some permanent object of affection; and that object, whatever it is, limits the field of its operation. The man who loves money most, will have all his faculties confined to that region; or fame most, the same; or pleasure most, the same. In whatever the heart centres its affections, to that it binds the intellect, the imagination, the sympathies, the whole soul. It will not, it cannot, go beyond that object. But all these objects are limited. Hence the soul is hemmed in as in a cage. In order to have freedom, the heart should be centred upon an infinite object, and this Christ does. He generates in the human soul supreme love for God; and with God as the Centre of the heart all the faculties and the powers have unbounded scope for their operation. Christ is the only One that can do this, and He does it effectively. "*Ye shall be free indeed.*"

CONCLUSION. Ponder well the fact, that all souls which are not made free by Christ are in slavery. Even the heathen considered

the virtues essential to true freedom. *Cicero* said, "The wise man alone is free." *Plato* represents the lusts as the hardest tyrants. *Seneca* speaks of the passions as the worst thralldom, *Epictetus* said, "Liberty is the name of virtue." And this virtue is obtained only through Christ. "*If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*"

No. LX.

THE PRIMAL PARENTS OF MORAL CHARACTER.

"I know that ye are Abraham's seed ; but (R. v. YET) ye seek to kill Me, because My word hath no (R. v. NOT FREE COURSE) place in you," &c.—viii. 37—44.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 39.—"*They answered and said unto Him, Abraham is our father*" (R. v. OUR FATHER IS ABRAHAM). This was their darling thought. As a people, they prided themselves on being descendants of Abraham. On account of this, they considered themselves the special favourites of Heaven. "*Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.*" Though they were the descendants of Abraham, our Saviour reminds them they were not his children. A father may have many offspring, but only a few children. They only are children who have the true spirit of children. All men are God's offspring ; but only those who have the true filial spirit are His sons. Physical lineage is one thing, ethical lineage is another, and very different.

Ver. 40.—"*But now ye seek to kill Me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of* (R. v. FROM) *God : this did not Abraham.*" Abraham was generous and loving, you are malignant and cruel ; and although physically you are his descendants, morally you are not his children.

Ver. 41.—"*Ye do the deeds* (R. v. WORKS) *of your father.*" Who this father is appears in the sequel. You have a parentage different to that of Abraham. "*Then said they to Him, We be* (R. v. WERE NOT) *not born of fornication.*" What they mean is, We are not bastards—who were excluded from the congregation (Deut. xxx. 22)—but we are the genuine offspring of Abraham. "*We have*

one Father, even God." Being the true descendants of Abraham, we have one God, as he had,—the same God. The one paternity ensures the other.

Ver. 42.—"*Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love Me.*" All true children of God will love His Son, not seek to murder Him as you do. "*For I proceeded* (R. v. CAME) *forth and came* (R. v. AM COME) *from God ; neither came I of Myself, but He sent Me.*" "For from God I proceeded, and am come." He was conscious of being sent by God, both ontologically and ethically.

Ver. 43.—"*Why do ye not understand My speech ?*" "*Δαλιά*, in distinction from *λόγος*, the personal language, the mode of speech, the familiar tone and sound of the words, in distinction from their meaning. From its original idea of talk, babble, *δαλιά* here preserves the element of vividness, warmth, familiarity. It is the *φωνή*, the tone of spirituality, and tone of love in the shepherd voice of Christ. They are so far from recognizing this loving tone, that they are incapable of even listening to the substance of His words with a pure, undistracted, spiritual ear. Fanaticism is characterized by false hearing, and words primarily by false hearing."—*Lange*. "*Even because ye cannot hear My word.*" *λόγος* means His doctrine, His word concerning spiritual things.

Ver. 44.—"*Ye are of your father the devil.*" Alford remarks, that this is one of the most decisive testimonies to the objective personality of the devil. By "father," Christ means,

not the fatherhood of being, but the fatherhood of character. "*And the lusts of your father ye will* (R. V. IT IS YOUR WILL TO) *do.*" Ye desire to do. The impure, malignant, untruthful propensities of your father ye are disposed to do. "*He was a murderer from the beginning.*" From the beginning of what? Not of his existence; if so, the Infinite Creator is the author of sin. But from the beginning of human history. His spirit is malignant, he is the inspirer of all murderers. "*And abode* (R. V. STOOD) *not in the truth.*" "And stands not in the truth."—Dr. Davidson. The expression does not mean that he was

once in the truth, and fell from it—this is a great Biblical fact; but that he does not now stand in the truth. He is out of the truth, out of sympathy with eternal realities. "*Because there is no truth in him.*" He is utterly untrustworthy, filled with falsehoods. "*When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own.*" Some render it, "he speaks of his own nature;" and others, "of his own resources, or treasures." "*For he is a liar, and the father of it*" (R. V. THEREOF). Who is the father of lies? not the Creator of the universe,—He is the truth; but the devil, and all the lies in this world are from him.

HOMILETICS.

The grand subject which we shall use these words to illustrate, is *Moral Ancestry*; and three facts are suggested concerning it.

I.—THAT THE ANCESTRY OF A MAN'S CHARACTER, IS FOR MANY REASONS MORE IMPORTANT TO HIM THAN THAT OF HIS CORPOREAL EXISTENCE.

When the Jews here referred to Abraham, their physical ancestor, in a spirit of proud exultation, Christ brought forward their moral ancestry as something far more worthy of their consideration. As if He said, What does it matter from whose loins you came? The great question is, From whose *spirit* did you derive your character? The father of a man's corporeal existence is not always the father of his character. These men came from Abraham corporeally, but they had not the faith, the nobleness, the moral generosity of their ancestor. It is often so. Holy fathers have sometimes children corrupt in character, and the reverse.

(1.) It is natural that children should have the moral character of their parents. The moral susceptibility of a child's nature, its filial instinct to love and imitate its parent, and the special opportunities which the parent has to instil his principles and breathe his spirit into the young heart, might naturally lead one to expect, that the moral character of the child would be but a reproduction of that of the parent. (2.) When it is so, it is either a blessing or a curse. If the child inherits the character of a truly Christly parent, the advantage is inexpressibly great, and the reverse. (3.) In either case, where the moral character of the child is not that of the parent, it proves the natural freedom of the human soul. What more powerfully demonstrates the natural liberty of the human soul, and its consequent responsibility, than the power of a child to form a character essentially different to that of the parent? If any being in the universe could make a moral

character for us, that being would be our natural parent; but he has no absolute power in this work. Hence every soul is free, and amenable to moral government. But our point is, that the ancestry of *character*, is for many reasons more important to man than that of his corporeal existence. The following reasons may be suggested—

First: That a man is responsible for his moral parentage, and not for his corporeal. We had no choice whatever in our earthly ancestry, whether we should descend from the loins of princes or paupers, scoundrels or saints. The man who boasts of his physical ancestry is simply a fool. As a native of this island, what merit or demerit belongs to me, whether I descended from the hungry vagrants that William the Assassin brought to these shores, or from the grand old Druids, the Celtic aborigines of the island? But it does matter to me where my *character* has come from; for this I am responsible. I am responsible for my convictions, the moral spirit, tenour, and habits of my life. My moral father has been to me, more or less, a matter of choice.

Another reason may be suggested—

Secondly: That corporeal existence will prove an intolerable curse if the character is bad. "It had been good for that man if he had not been born," says Christ. It would be a thousand times better that a man had never come into existence, if during his probationary period he constructs a character opposed to the will of God. Better never to have been, than to have been wicked. Existence apart from virtue must become an intolerable curse.

Another reason is—

Thirdly: That character survives corporeal existence. All that we derived from our earthly parents we give back to the earth, we leave in the dust; but our character we carry with us wherever we go. And as our character, so will be our position in the universe, and our relation to the Infinite for ever.

Another fact suggested by the passage is—

II.—THAT IN THE ANCESTRY OF CHARACTER THERE ARE TWO PRIMAL PROGENITORS.

Christ speaks of these under the titles "*devil*" and "*God*."

First: He speaks of both as personal existences. He speaks of the *devil* as a personality. "*Ye are of your father the devil*," &c. In these modern times there are men professing faith in Christianity who deny the personality of the great *evil one*; they reason his tremendous agency down into principles, abstractions of the brain. I accept the authority of Christ on this question. He knew the devil, He was at his creation. He speaks of *God* as a Person. "*If God were your Father*." Again, "*which I have heard of God*." Ontologically, the relation of these great personalities in

the universe is that of the Creator to the creature; ethically, that of holiness to wickedness.

Secondly: He speaks of both as morally antagonistic. (1.) The devil is malignant. A "*murderer*." Malevolence is his inspiration; he is a "roaring lion, going about seeking whom he may devour." God is good; He is love; love is the spring of all His activities. (2.) The devil is untruthful. He "*abode not in the truth*." There is no truth in him. Once he was in the truth.

"High in the midst of all the throng,
Satan, a tall archangel, sat."

He "kept not his first estate." He renounced moral facts for fictions. He is not only false in himself, but the promoter of falsehood. "*When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own*." On the other hand, God is truth. He is the absolute Reality. (3.) The devil is Christ-hating. Jesus said unto them, "*If God were your Father, ye would love Me*." You hate Me, and thus prove your moral descent from the devil, who hates Me. The devil hates Christ. On the other hand, God loves Christ. "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."

Now, these two personal existences are the primal progenitors of all moral character in this world. Morally, every man is either the child of the devil or the child of God. Every man can say morally, either, "Our Father, Who art in *heaven*," or, "Our Father, who art in *hell*."

The other fact suggested by the passage is—

III.—THAT EVERY MAN'S PRIMAL MORAL ANCESTOR IS DEMONSTRATED BY HIS LIFE.

"*If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham*." From Christ's language we may infer—

First: That the man of falsehood is a child of the devil; the man of truth is the child of God. Alas, the overwhelming majority of mankind are at once the subjects, the agents, the advocates of lies. Their whole life is a lie, out of harmony with eternal fact; they walk in a vain show, they are the children of the devil. On the other hand, the man of truth is the child of God. Truth to him is everything; he will sacrifice everything to it, even life itself. He is the child of God. Like Paul, he says: "I count not my life dear unto me."

Secondly: That the man of malice is a child of the devil; the man of love is the child of God. "*Ye seek to kill Me*." "*The devil was a murderer from the beginning*." What malice there is in the world—political, commercial, religious! The millions have ever been ready to "*kill*" men for entertaining and propagating religious convictions opposed to their own prejudices. There are many

ways of killing. Parents kill their children, husbands their wives, masters their servants, &c. &c., by an intolerant persecuting spirit in daily life. These are the children of the devil. All the loving and the tender are of God.

Thirdly: That the man hating Christ is a child of the devil; the man loving Christ is the child of God. "*If God were your Father, ye would love Me.*" The unregenerate millions hate Christ; and although few demonstrate their hatred in their talk or writing, yet in their spirit and life they manifest their enmity. What though a man declare his friendship for me, if he habitually pursues a course of conduct hostile to my wishes, views, interests, reputation; is he not my foe? All haters of Christ are the children of the devil. On the other hand, those who love Christ in sincerity and truth are the children of God.

CONCLUSION. What an unveiling of the moral universe is here! In Christ's view of life, all men are either the children of the devil or the children of God. All other distinctions, social, intellectual, religious, are lost in this distinction. On this little planet there are two great moral families, those of the devil, and those of God. Man, thou canst change thy moral father.

NO. LXI.

THE RATIONALE OF UNBELIEF.

"And because I tell you (R. V. SAY) the truth, ye believe Me not. Which of you convinceth (R. V. CONVICTETH) Me of sin? And if I say the truth (R. V. IF I SAY TRUTH), why do ye not believe Me? He that is of God heareth God's words (R. V. THE WORDS OF GOD): ye therefore (R. V. FOR THIS CAUSE YE) hear them not, because ye are not of God. Then answered the Jews, and said unto Him, Say we not well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?"—viii. 45—48.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 45.—"*And because I tell you the truth, ye believe Me not.*" Here Christ tells the Jews that, like their diabolic father, they were out of sympathy with truth, and would not believe Him who spoke the truth.

Ver. 46.—"*Which of you convinceth Me of sin?*" What does He mean by sin (*ἁμαρτία*) here—mere intellectual error, or moral falsehood and wrong? He means, I presume, sin in its widest sense—all that is untrue in thought, improper in feeling, wrong in life. "*Which of you convicteth Me of any sin,*" either of judgment, feeling, speech, or act? Perhaps Christ means here to say, I am free from any moral wrongness, and therefore could not

be untruthful. "*And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe Me?*" Since you cannot find anything morally wrong in Me, it is clear that I only speak the truth; and if I do, why do ye not believe Me?

Ver. 47.—"*He that is of God heareth God's words.*" "A syllogism; but not with this conclusion: I now speak God's words (*De Wette*); but you are not of God. That Jesus speaks the word of God is presupposed in the foregoing. An attentive hearing and reception of the word of God is meant. This is conditioned by being from God, by moral relationship with God; for only kindred can know kindred. The being of God has been more particularly characterized as a being

drawn by God (chap. vi. 44), being taught by Him (ver. 45), as showing itself by doing truth in God (chap. iii. 21).—*Lange*. “*Ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.*” It is because you have no moral affinity with God, no sympathy with Him, that you hear Him not.

Ver. 48.—“*Then answered the Jews, and said unto Him, Say we not well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast*

a devil?” “What intense and virulent scorn! The ‘*Say we not well*’ is a reference to their former charge, Thou hast a devil (chap. vii. 20). ‘*Samaritan,*’ here, means more than no Israelite at all. It means one who pretended but had no manner of claim to connection with Abraham, retorting perhaps to His denial of their true descent from the father of the faithful.” —*Dr. Brown*.

HOMILETICS.

These words help to give us an insight into the *Rationale of unbelief*. There are five things discoverable in these words, which go a great way toward the generating and sustaining of unbelief in the Gospel.

I.—REPUGNANCE TO THE TRUTH.

“*Because I tell you the truth, ye believe Me not.*” If He had given them popular dogmas or speculative disquisitions, they might have believed in Him; but He gave them truth—*REALITY*. And the truth He gave them was not intellectual and speculative, but moral and regulative—truth that addressed itself with an imperial force to the central nerves of their being. They were living in falsehood, appearances, and shams, far away from the awful region of spiritual realities. This truth came in direct collision with their associations, their prepossessions, their pride, their interests, their habits; it was therefore repugnant to them, and they would not have it.

First: Man’s repugnance to truth reveals his abnormal condition. His soul is as truly organized for truth as the eyes are organized for light. Truth is its natural atmosphere, natural scenery, natural beverage, natural food.

Secondly: Man’s repugnance to truth suggests his awful future. The soul and truth will not always be kept apart. The time must come, in the case of every man, when the intervening fiction and falsehoods shall melt away as clouds, when the interspace gulfs shall be bridged over, and when the soul shall feel itself in vivid, conscious, eternal contact with moral realities. Another thing discoverable in this passage is—

II.—THE PURITY OF CHRIST.

“*Which of you convinceth Me of sin?*” * Christ is the Substance of the Truth, the Truth itself; and His invincible intolerance to all sin, and His refulgent purity, repel the depraved heart. “Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.” The first beams of morning are not half so uninviting and repulsive

* See Ullman, on the “Sinlessness of Jesus,” published in 1863.

to the midnight burglar, as the moral rays of Christ's truth are to a corrupt heart. Moral purity makes the hell of depravity. Its effulgent beams, as they fall directly on the elements of moral corruption in the soul, kindle the unquenchable flames of gehenna. We discover in this passage—

III.—ESTRANGEMENT FROM GOD.

"He that is of God, heareth God's words." *"Of God"* in a moral sense, born of God, having the true filial sympathies warm and regnant. Such sympathies are essential to true faith. The more love a child has in him, the more credulous he is in relation to the utterances of his parent. Men in their unregenerate state have not this sympathy. Hence their unbelief. They do not like to *"retain God in all their thoughts."* Love is the foundation of all true faith. I only believe in a man in proportion to the strength of my love for him; and I can only trust God as I love Him. *"He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love."* Another thing discoverable in this passage is—

IV.—PRIDE OF INTELLECT.

"Then answered the Jews, and said unto Him, Say we not well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?" They had said this before (viii. 20), and here they pride themselves on their sagacity. *"Say we not well?"* Are we not clever? Can we not discern spirits? What insight we have into character! How we can peer into the springs of action! We cannot be deceived. Is not this ever the spirit of unbelief? Infidels have ever been too scientific to believe in miracles, too philosophic to require a special revelation, too independent to require even the invaluable aid of Christ, too moral to need any inward reformation. *"Say we not well?"* This is their spirit. It comes out in their books, in their lectures, in their converse with their fellow-men, and in their daily life. *"We are the wise men, and wisdom will die with us."* This pride is essentially inimical to true faith. *"Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."* Another thing discoverable in the passage is—

V.—UNCHARITABLENESS OF DISPOSITION.

"Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil." Suppose He was a Samaritan: are not Samaritans men, and have they not a claim to human sympathy? Are all Samaritans bad, and are there none good amongst the thousands? All Samaritans have devils. Thou art a Samaritan, therefore Thou *"hast a devil."* This was their uncharitable reasoning, and it has ever characterized infidelity. All Christians are hypocrites, all preachers are crafty mercenaries, all Churches are nurseries of superstition, all ecclesiastics are cun-

ning worldlings, robing themselves in sanctity and fattening on the toils of the millions: hence we will have nothing to do with this Christianity. Far enough are we from wishing men to believe in the corrupt, the crafty, and the vile. True charity is often rigorous in its criticism, and inexorable in its denunciations of wrong. True charity is never blind; it is all eye. Uncharitableness is evermore a barrier to faith, for it is always suspicious, and loses the power of trusting. "Infidelity," says *Robert Hall*, "is the joint offspring of an irreligious temper and unholy speculation, employed, not in examining the evidences of Christianity, but in detecting the vices and imperfections of professing Christians."

CONCLUSION. Such are some of the causes of unbelief; and perhaps those causes were never more rampant in any age or land than now and here. Years ago, Sharon Turner, a high-class thinker, and distinguished author, summed up infidelity in the following words: "It is the champion of matter against mind—of body against spirit—of the senses against the reason—of passions against duty—of self-interest against self-government—of dissatisfaction against content—of the present against the future—of the little that is known against all that is unknown—of our limited experience against boundless possibility."

No. LXII.

THE ANTI-DIABOLISM OF CHRIST.

"Then answered the Jews, and said unto Him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour My Father, and ye do dishonour (R. V. YE DISHONOUR) Me. And (R. V. BUT) I seek not Mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep My saying (R. V. WORD), he shall never see death."—viii. 48—51.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 48.—*"Then answered the Jews, and said unto Him, Say we not well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?"* "The Samaritans are here regarded as unsound in faith, or heretics. And the heresy of Jesus they found in the fact that He, although a man, made Himself God (ch. x. 33). 'Thou hast a devil,' or evil spirit (comp. ch. vii. 20), refers to the enthusiastic manner in which He proclaimed His delusion. Similar charges had been alleged by the ungodly against the prophets of the Old Testament. In 2 Kings ix. 11, the servants of his lord said to Jehu, when a prophet had been with him, 'Wherefore came this mad fellow

to thee?' 'Every man that is mad and maketh himself a prophet,' is the style in which a false prophet writes concerning the true."—*Hengstenberg*. Why did they call Him a Samaritan? They knew He was not a Samaritan, for they had reproached Him before as being a Galilean and a Nazarene. The reason was this: their vocabulary of abuse furnished no stronger epithet. To be a Samaritan, to them, was to be a demon, one inspired with a diabolic spirit.

Ver. 49.—*"Jesus answered, I have not a devil"* [δαίμόνον, "demon"]. "What calm dignity is here! Verily, 'when reviled, He reviled not again' (1 Pet. ii. 23). Compare Paul before

Festus: 'I am not mad, most noble Festus' (Acts xxvi, 25). Our Lord adds not, 'Nor am I a Samaritan,' that He might not even seem to partake of their contempt for a race that had already welcomed Him as their Christ, and begun to be blessed by Him."—*Dr. Brown*. "*But I honour My Father, and ye do dishonour Me.*" Christ honours His Father by ascribing His distinguished excellences to the Divine within Him. But they dishonoured Him—Christ—by attri-

buted all that was peculiar in Him to a diabolic source.

Ver. 50.—"*And I seek not Mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.*" He seems to intimate that He leaves His *éōza*, "glory," in the hands of the Father.

Ver. 51.—"*Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death.*" This he had expressed many times before, not however in such a bold and naked form.

HOMILETICS.

The subject that the words suggest, is *The Anti-diabolism of Christ*. Notice —

I.—CHRIST HONOURS THE FATHER; THE DEVIL DOES NOT.

"*I honour My Father, and ye do dishonour Me.*" How does Christ honour the Father?

First: By a faithful representation of the Father's character. He was "the faithful and true Witness:" the highest Revelation of God in the universe. The revelation of the Infinite which the material creation gives, is very dim and limited, compared with that revelation given by Jesus Christ. He was the "brightness of His Father's glory, the express image of His person." "In Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." He honoured Him—

Secondly: By supreme devotion to the Father's will. He came to this world in order to work out the Divine will in relation to humanity, to substitute in all human hearts truth for error, purity for pollution, benevolence for selfishness, spirituality for materialism, God for the devil. He came, in one word, "to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," to sweep moral evil clean out of the earth.

Now this is just what the devil does not do. On the contrary, the devil seeks to dishonour God by misrepresenting Him, dealing out calumnies into every ear that will listen to them; by opposing with might and main the Divine will. He dares Omnipotence "to arms." "He is a liar, and the father of it." The words suggest—

II.—CHRIST SEEKS NOT HIS OWN GLORY; THE DEVIL DOES.

"*I seek not My own glory.*" Personal ambition and self-seeking had no place in the heart of Christ. "He made Himself of no reputation, but took on Him the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," &c. Love to the Infinite Father seemed to swallow up His *ego*-ism. He was self-oblivious. Often does He say, "I seek not My own will." Had He sought His own earthly glory, He would have been the triumphant Leader of all armies, the absolute Emperor of all

nations, instead of which, He was born in a stable, lived without a home, and died upon a cross.

All this is anti-diabolic. Ambition is the inspiration of Satan. His motto is, "Better reign in hell than serve in heaven." He cares for no one else, and would kindle hells for a thousand generations in order to maintain his own dominion and gratify his own ambition. Just so far as a man loses his own *ego*-ism in love for the Infinite, he is Christ-like. Just so far as he is self-conscious and aiming at his own personal ends, he is devil-like. The words suggest—

III.—CHRIST DELIVERS FROM DEATH; THE DEVIL CANNOT.

"*If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death.*" What does He mean by death here?

First: Does He mean the dissolution of soul and body? Not so; for all the millions that "*kept His saying*" have gone down to the grave.

Secondly: Does He mean extinction of existence? If He does, it is in all probability true. It is morally certain, to say the least, that all genuine disciples of Christ will inherit perpetual existence. This He Himself has taught. "This is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one that seeketh the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life."

Thirdly: Does He mean the destruction of that which makes death repugnant to man's nature? If so, the dying experience of millions demonstrates its truth. "The sting of death is sin." Take sin away, and the event of the dissolution of soul and body becomes one of the brightest prospects in the pilgrimage of souls. It is a mere step over a beautiful river from a wilderness into a Canaan; it is the mere opening of the door from a cell into palatial apartments. Now, does the devil deliver from death? No, he cannot. He *cannot* raise a dead insect to life, nor make a fading flower re-bloom; and if he could, he would not. The work of destruction is the gratification of his malignant nature. He goes about "seeking whom he may devour."

CONCLUSION. How essentially antagonistic are the inspirations of good and evil: the kingdom of the devil, and the kingdom of Christ! The one is God-honouring, the other God-dishonouring; the one self-abnegating piety, the other blasphemous ambition; the one death extinction, the other death production. Kind Heaven! inspire the world with the spirit of anti-diabolism, the spirit of Christ.

No. LXIII.

CHRIST GREATER AND OLDER THAN ABRAHAM.

"Then said the Jews unto Him, Now we know that Thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and Thou sayest, If a man keep My saying (R. V. WORD), he shall never taste of death," &c.—viii. 52—59.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 52.—*"Then said the Jews unto Him, Now we know that Thou hast a devil."* ἐγνώκαμεν. We are sure, have found out. δαίμόν ἔχ. "His implied claim to a dignity greater than that of Abraham and the prophets, and His assertion of supernatural virtue in His words were, as they affected to believe, a proof that He was a raving fanatic, possessed with an evil spirit that prompted Him to such extravagances."—*Webster and Wilkinson*. "*Now we know.*" As if they had said, We stated this just now, and we were almost frightened by our rashness, but now we are certain that "*Thou hast a devil.*"

Ver. 53.—"*Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead?*" &c. The Jews understood Him to mean merely bodily death. Their meaning seems to be: Thou sayest that if a man keep Thy words he shall never die. Abraham kept God's words, and yet he died. So did the prophets; they kept God's words, but died. Yet Thou sayest, those that keep Thy sayings shall never die; who then art Thou? What arrogance, what blasphemy!

Ver. 54.—"*Jesus answered, If I honour (R. V. GLORIFY) Myself, My honour (R. V. GLORY) is nothing: it is My Father that honoureth (R. V. GLORIFIETH) Me; of whom ye say, that He is your God.*" "These words seem to be uttered in order to prepare the way for the more startling declaration which follows in verse 56. '*Honour Myself.*' If My honour is, as you say, self-fabricated. '*Is nothing.*' It is the nothing you pronounce it. '*Your God.*' The Source of My true dignity is the God of Abraham, of the prophets, of Israel, and, as ye claim, of yourselves. Your quarrel is therefore with them and Him."—*Whedon*.

Ver. 55.—"*Yet (R. V. AND) ye have*

not known Him; but I know Him: and if I should say, I know Him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know Him, and keep His saying" (R. V. WORD). "He implies that He cannot so speak of God as to disguise the fact of His intimate knowledge of Him, without speaking untruly, and imitating them, who spoke of God as their God and Father, whereas they knew him not. ὁμοίως ἔμων. The ordinary construction is with the dative; but the genitive is used by classical authors: it makes the idea of comparison more prominent. τὸν λ. α. τηρῶ. If we take these words in connection with verse 51, He implies by them that He also lived by keeping His Father's word, as men should live by keeping His. Comp. vi. 57; xv. 10."

Ver. 56.—"*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day.*" Exulted or exceedingly rejoiced that he should see: that is, exulted to see it by anticipation. "*And he saw it, and was glad.*" Does this mean that he saw it in prophetic vision, or that he saw it in his disembodied spirit from the sphere of celestial blessedness? Or that he saw it in the familiar intercourse which he had with the "angel of the Lord" when he appeared to him in his tent at Mamre? It scarcely matters. However, I incline to the last opinion. In either case, he saw it.

Ver. 57.—"*Then said the Jews (R. V. THE JEWS THEREFORE SAID) unto Him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?*" *Alford* remarks that our Lord's age at this time cannot be inferred from this statement. Fifty years was with the Jews the term of ripe manhood; it was the age when the Levite ceased to officiate. All that is meant here is, You are not yet past middle life, not even on the verge of old age, and how

canst Thou say that Thou hast seen Abraham?

Ver. 58.—“*Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*” Dr. Brown’s remarks on this verse seem a faithful explanation. “*Before Abraham was, πρὶν Ἀβραὰμ γενέσθαι.* Before Abraham came into existence, *I am.* ἐγὼ εἰμι. The difference between the two verbs applied to Abraham and Himself in this great saying is to be carefully observed. Before Abraham was brought into being, I exist. The statement, therefore, is not that Christ came into existence before Abraham did, as Arians affirm is the meaning: it is, that He never came into being at all, but existed before Abraham had a being; which of course was as much as to say that He existed before all creation, or from eternity, as in ch. i. 1. In that sense, beyond all doubt, the Jews under-

stood Him, as will appear from what follows.”

Ver. 59.—“*Then took they up stones (R. V. THEY TOOK UP STONES THEREFORE) to cast at Him: but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by*” (R. V. OMITTS THIS CLAUSE). The last clause of this verse is considered by the best critics to be spurious. It is clear from the fact that the Jews took stones to cast at Him, that they considered the expression “*Before Abraham was, I am*” as expressive of His eternity, and His claim therefore to Godhead. This they regarded as blasphemy, and for the sin of blasphemy they felt justified in stoning Him. While the Jews were in the act of selecting the stones, it would seem that Jesus moved away by a route which interposed projecting objects between them and Him, and so He escaped from the temple.

HOMILETICS.

These words present to us the fact that *Christ is both greater and older than Abraham.* The passage shows—

I.—THAT CHRIST IS GREATER THAN ABRAHAM.

“*Then said the Jews unto Him, Now we know that Thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and Thou sayest, If a man keep My saying, he shall never taste of death. Art Thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead?*”

Three things are to be noticed here—

First: The implied denial of the Jews that Christ was greater than Abraham. In their implied denial we see—(1.) A sensuous interpretation. “*Abraham is dead.*” They took death in its mere material sense, the death of the body; they had no profounder idea of death than the dissolution of mind from matter. The dissolution of mind from truth, virtue, happiness, God—which is of all deaths the worst, which is of truth death—had not entered their carnal souls. The dissolution of soul from body—or corporeal death—is but the *palpable type* and the probable result of the separation of the human soul from the life of holiness and God. This is death—the death to which Christ referred; and this the carnal Jews misunderstood. Christ asserts that the man who practically obeyed Him would not taste of this death, nor will he, nor can he. “*This is life eternal, to know Thee.*” In the implied denial we see—(2.) Their ancestral pride. “*Art Thou greater than*

our father Abraham, which is dead? And the prophets are dead." Their pride of ancestry led them to believe that Abraham was the greatest man in the universe. We are the greatest people in the world, for we descended from the loins of the greatest man, and that was Abraham. Ah me! these two things—sensuous interpretation and ancestral pride, have been in all ages, and still are, amongst the greatest obstructions to the spread of truth. Notice—

Secondly: The reply of Christ to this implied denial. In His reply three things are noteworthy. (1.) He asserts that He honoured the Father, they did not. "*If I honour Myself, My honour is nothing.*" (2.) He knew the Father, they did not. "*Yet ye have not known Him; but I know Him: and if I should say, I know Him not, I shall be a liar.*" He knew the Father. He was the only Being who knew Him. "No man hath seen God at any time," &c. (3.) He served the Father, they did not. "*I know Him, and keep His saying.*" His "meat and drink was to do the will of His Father." Notice—

Thirdly: The declaration of His superiority to Abraham. "*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad.*"* However he saw it, He means it was a wonderful sight to him; Christ's day was a period that rejoiced him.

The passage shows—

II.—THAT CHRIST IS OLDER THAN ABRAHAM.

"*Before Abraham was, I am.*" This declaration struck them—

First: As absurd. "*Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?*" Abraham lived thousands of years ago, how could he see Thy day? or how couldst Thou see Abraham? How absurd, for a man who had not reached middle life, to give Himself a patriarchal age! This declaration struck them—

Secondly: As blasphemous. "*Then took they up stones to cast at Him.*" They evidently understood Him to mean that He existed before Abraham, and therefore put Himself on an equality with God.

CONCLUSION. How sublimely unique is Christ in the history of the human race! Greater than Abraham. Abraham was great, one of the most illustrious of the human family, the "friend of God," the ancestor of a wonderful race of men. Christ is older than Abraham. Abraham lived upwards of thirty centuries before; but Christ lived before Abraham. "*Before Abraham was, I am.*" "In the beginning was the Word," &c. &c.

* See Germ, p. 259.

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. XXXIV.

CHRISTIAN PIETY IN RELATION TO THE FUTURE.

“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day : and he saw it, and was glad.”—viii. 56.

The text leads us to consider the aspect of Christian piety in relation to the future, and we infer—

I. THAT CHRISTIAN PIETY TURNS THE SOUL TOWARDS THE FUTURE.

“*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day.*” Piety seems to have turned Abraham’s mind to the “*day*” of Christ. This refers undoubtedly to Christ’s Incarnation, personal ministry, and spiritual reign. Nineteen long centuries rolled between Abraham and the period of Christ’s Incarnation. Still he saw it. Christian piety does two things in the mind in relation to the future.

First: It gives an interesting revelation of the future. Science, poetry, literature, shed no light upon the on-coming periods of our being; but the Bible does. It opens up the future history of the race to us.

Secondly: It gives a felt interest in the blessedness of the future. It gave Abraham a felt interest in the “*day*” of Christ. It gives the good a felt interest in the glories that are coming. And what glorious things are on their march! We infer—

II.—THAT CHRISTIAN PIETY FASTENS THE SOUL UPON CHRIST IN THE FUTURE.

“*My day.*” To the godly, Christ is everything in the future. “The glory of their brightest days, and comfort of their nights.” Do the rivers point to the sea? Does the needle point to the pole? Do the plants point to the sun? Does hunger cry for food? Does life pant for air? Even so does the heart of Christly piety point to Christ in the future. Christ has a “*day*” in the future, His universal day on earth, the day of His glorious revelation at the judgment. We infer—

III.—THAT CHRISTIAN PIETY BRINGS JOY TO THE SOUL FROM THE FUTURE.

“*Your father Abraham rejoiced.*” It made Abraham “*glad.*” He was glad with a *benevolent* gladness; he knew the world would be blessed by Christ’s advent. He was glad with a *religious* gladness; he knew that God would be glorified by His advent. Several reasons might make us glad when we think of the coming day of Christ. (1.) In His day there will be a solution of all difficulties; everything will be explained. (2.) In His day there will be the

termination of all imperfections, physical, mental, spiritual. (3.) In His day there will be the consummation of unending blessedness. "They shall hunger no more." Learn from this subject—

First: The congruity of Christianity with the prospective tendency of the soul. The soul is everlastingly pointing to the future. Christianity meets this tendency, ministers to it, satisfies it. Learn—

Secondly: The antidote of Christianity to the forebodings of the soul. Some souls are constantly boding evil, and well all ungodly souls may. Christianity lights up the future. We learn—

Thirdly: The fitness of Christianity to the aspirations of the soul. Wonderful is the good after which some souls are aspiring in the future. The present and the material have lost for them their attractions. They have done with them, they have thrown them away, as boys who have sucked the orange throw away the peel. Christianity meets these loftiest aspirations. Man cannot aspire after anything higher than that which Christianity supplies: "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard," &c.

NO. LXIV.

THE MAN BORN BLIND.

TYPES OF CHARACTER IN RELATION TO CHRIST'S WORK.

(NO. 1.)—THOSE WHO CONSCIOUSLY NEED CHRIST'S WORK.

(*The blind man healed on the Sabbath. Subsequent discourses at Jerusalem.*
JOHN ix. 1—41 ; x. 1—21.)

"And as Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth," &c.
ix. 1—7.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 1.—*"And as Jesus (R. v. HE) passed by."* Either on His way from the temple after the attempted assault, or, as some think, on the next Sabbath. *"He saw a man."* This man probably sat where beggars were accustomed to resort, in the neighbourhood of the Temple. *"Which was blind from his birth."* It would seem a notorious fact that he was born blind.

Ver. 2.—*"And His disciples asked Him, saying, Master (R. v. RABBI), who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was (R. v. SHOULD BE) born blind?"* "As the doctrine of the pre-existence of souls and that of the metempsychosis—the transmission of the soul of one person into the body of another—though held by certain of the more philosophical Jews, was never a current belief of the people,

we are not to understand the disciples here to refer to sin committed in a former state of existence; and probably it is but a loose way of concluding that sin somewhere has surely been the cause of this calamity."—*Brown.*

Ver. 3.—*"Jesus answered, Neither hath (R. v. DID) this man sinned (R. v. SIN), nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."* "But that," ἀλλ' ἵνα, namely, to this end, was he born blind. The ultimate object of evil, as of things in general, is the glorification of God. Christ does not say that neither the blind man nor his parents had sinned, but that special sin was not to be charged on either in consequence of his blindness.

Ver. 4.—*"I (R. v. WE) must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no*

man can work." These words imply that Christ regarded Himself as having a special Divine work to do on earth, and to that work He must consecrate Himself with persevering diligence.

Ver. 5.—"*As long as* (R. V. WHEN) *I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*" "He evidently knew that the spiritual effect of His coming into the world would be typified by the act He was about to perform. The connection between these words and the preceding may be thus expressed: When My death removes me, so that I shall no longer perform My Father's work among you, then will that light be removed which at present creates for you a spiritual day; and so in xi. 9, 10. *ὅταν . . . ᾶ*. The expression denotes indefinite frequency, and must therefore be understood, in a general sense, applicable to present circumstances. Let Me be at any time in the world, I am at such time the light. It is not meant that in consequence of His special mission He was at that particular time the light of the world; but that, being in the world, He was, in consequence of His nature and origin, the light of the world. *ὥς εἰμι*, 'My character is light.'

Ver. 6.—"*When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man* (R. V. HIS EYES) *with the clay.*" What is the object of such actions as these? Why did He, Who could by a word open the eyes of the blind, here spit on the ground, make clay, and anoint the man's eyes with clay, and send him to wash in the pool of Siloam? Probably to deepen the

impression of the miracle. For this reason, probably, Moses used the rod to get water from Horeb, and the tree to sweeten the waters of Marah. For this reason, too, probably Elijah used his mantle to divide the waters (2 Kings ii. 8). All this exertion, too, on our Saviour's part would strike against the superstitious sentiments which the Pharisees had in relation to the Sabbath.

Ver. 7.—"*And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.*" This is a pool or a small pond in an oblong form, at the lower end of the Valley of Jehoshaphat, overlooked by the wall of Mount Zion. Its sides are built up with stones, and a column stands in the middle, indicating that a chapel was once built over it. It is in length 54 feet by 18 in breadth. It is fed probably by water from the temple mount. ("*Which is by interpretation, Sent.*") It can hardly be doubted but that the Evangelist was guided by some sense of the appropriateness of the name of the pool to the occasion. Either the character of Jesus as the Sent of God, or the character to be assumed by the blind man in order to obtain his cure, the sent by Jesus, would seem to be intimated. Reference to the similar cure and the whole case of Naaman renders the latter the more probable. It should be observed, that in Isaiah viii. 6 this pool is spoken of emblematically. "The waters of Shiloah that go softly." "*He went his way* (R. V. AWAY) *therefore, and washed, and came seeing.*" It does not appear that he came to Jesus, nor did he see Jesus at all until his expulsion from the synagogue (ver. 35).

HOMILETICS.

As this chapter is the history of one event, opening and closing (unlike most other chapters) with reference to the same object, viz. that of a man "*born blind*," homiletically it may be divided into several sections; each section may be used to represent certain classes of men in relation to Christ. These sections may be designated those who *consciously need* the work of Christ; those who are *speculatively interested* in the work of Christ; those who are *malignantly prejudiced* against the work of Christ; those who are

heartily interested in the work of Christ; and those who are *experimentally restored* by the work of Christ.

These seven verses we take to represent *those who consciously need the work of Christ*. Looking at the poor blind man before us, as representing the consciously needy class, two things are noteworthy—

I.—THE WRETCHEDNESS OF THEIR CONDITION.

First: This man was afflicted with blindness. "*A man blind from his birth.*" He had never enjoyed the blessings of vision. Those windows through which the human soul looks out upon the universe had, in his case, never been opened. Those doors through which the soul lets in the beauty of God's creation had been barred from his birth. Unknown to him was the glory of the heavens, the majesty of the mountains, the sublimity of the sea, the beauty of the emerald meadows, the waving forest, the floral vales. The world to him was a great, black, monotonous cave. To him never came—

"Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer rose."

Secondly: This man was afflicted with beggary. Day by day, perhaps from his earliest childhood, he sat near the temple in darkness, begging for the mere necessities of life. He lived on the cold, precarious charity of those who visited the temple. There, pinched with hunger, shivering in the cold, and scorched in the strong rays of the Eastern sun, he sat in the unbroken night of blindness, seeking relief of the passers-by. How great the affliction of this man! The world abounds with subjects of affliction to a greater or less extent. The blind, the deaf, the destitute, the diseased, we meet in all the walks of daily life. The question has often been asked, Why, under the government of God, should such cases as the one in the text occur? Why should the Great One send men into the world sometimes without the use of their limbs—cripples; sometimes without the use of their ears—deaf; sometimes without the use of their eyes—blind; sometimes without the use of their reason—idiots? These questions I have endeavoured to answer elsewhere.*

Thirdly: This man was afflicted with social heartlessness. The question of the disciples, "*Who did sin, this man or his parents?*" indicated a heartless disregard to his wretched condition. If the question fell on his ear, as in all probability it did, it must have struck pain into his heart. Their question involved a great error, viz. that present sufferings are the results and measures of individual sins. That suffering always implies sin, is peradventure an unquestionable fact; and that the sin of parents often entails sufferings on their

* See my "Homiletical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles," p. 46.

children, is too patent to admit of disputation. But that individual suffering is always the result of individual sin, is an egregious and pernicious error. It was indeed a common notion amongst the Jews. The whole book of Job seems to have been written in order to correct it. Christ Himself exposed the error (Luke xiii. 1—4). The sufferings of individuals are no just criteria of moral character. Their question involved a positive absurdity. Part of this question was very absurd. How could the blindness of a man "*born blind*" be the result of his sin? How could he sin before he was born? Did they believe in the Pythagorean doctrine of metempsychosis, or the transmigration of souls from one body to another, that they spoke of a man sinning before he was born? If so, their question was consistent with their faith; but it is not likely that the poor fishermen of Galilee held such a philosophical dogma.

This man, then, consciously required the help that Christ alone could render; he was blind, indigent, despised. Spiritually, all men in their unregenerate state are in as urgent a need of the aid of Christ as this man. Alas! but few realize their necessity. Another thing presented here is—

II.—THE NATURE OF THEIR DELIVERANCE.

We learn—

First: That the deliverance is the pre-determined work of God. "*Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.*" Christ does not mean that either this man or his parents were free from sin, but that their sin was not the cause of the man's blindness. His blindness was a Divine result for a Divine purpose; it was to afford scope for His remedial agency. God's restorative agency reveals Him often in more striking aspects than even His creating and preserving. God should be studied as a *Restorer*. We learn—

Secondly: That the deliverance was effected by Jesus Christ. "*I must work the works of Him that sent Me.*"* Those works were redemptive works. His work was to finish transgression and to make an end of sin; to heal all the diseases of mankind; to wipe away all tears from all faces.

(1.) This work He did *systematically*. He did not proceed in a capricious and desultory manner. He worked by a Divine programme. He did the right work in the right place, on the right person, at the right time. (2.) This work He did *diligently*. "*While it is day.*" He knew His work was great, and the period Divinely allotted for its accomplishment limited. These works of Christ suggest three truths of importance. (a.) There is a Divine *purpose* in every man's life. (b.) There is a Divine *work* for every man's life. (c.) There is a Divine *limit* to every man's life. (3.) This

* See Germ, p. 264.

work He did *appropriately*. "*As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.*" He assumes a character corresponding with the exigencies of the sufferer. To the thirsty woman at Jacob's well, He was the "*living water*;" to the mourning sisters at the grave of Lazarus, He was "*the resurrection and the life*;" to this poor blind man, He was the "*Light of the world.*" He is the central Light in all the spheres of being. The material heavens borrow their brightness from Him. The beams of reason are but the radiation of His intelligence; the rays of moral goodness are but emanations from Him, the "Sun of Righteousness." (4.) This work He did *unasked*. It does not appear that the blind man besought His interposition. "*As Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind.*" He looked, perhaps, stedfastly at him as he sat there in destitution and darkness, as He looked at the poor widow of Nain following her only son to the grave, as He looked at the fainting multitudes whom He fed by a miracle. Though the Jews had just taken up stones to cast at Him as He was leaving the temple, yet as He "*passed by*," He tenderly observed the poor blind sufferer. The violence that raged around Him did not disturb the calm flow of His compassion for sufferers. Ill-treatment from our fellow-mortals tends to make us miserable and misanthropic. Not so with Him. The fountain of His love was so infinite, that it admitted of no diminution. In this man's case He was "found of one who inquired not after Him." (5.) This work He did *instrumentally*. "*When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.*" These means were very simple. No chemical compounds were applied, no surgical operations were performed. Clay! Why such means were employed, who can tell? All we know is, that the healing virtue was not in the means, but in Himself. It is the prerogative of Christ to produce grand results by feeble instrumentalities. The man went, after the application of the clay to his eyes, to Siloam, as directed. "*He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.*" A new world opened round the man, and new and strange emotions came rushing into his soul. All this may be regarded as symbolic.

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. XXXV.

MORAL SIGNIFICANCE OF LIFE.

"I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."—ix. 4.

These are the words of Christ, and they suggest truths of importance to us all.

I.—THERE IS A DIVINE PURPOSE IN EVERY MAN'S LIFE.

Christ said that God had sent Him into the world, and so He has sent every man that exists. We come into this world, not by accident, not by necessity, nor by our own choice. Every man is "sent" here.

First: Then he has a right to be here. Who has a right to send him hence? Every man is sent here.

Secondly: Then he has some distinct mission. What is it? The words suggest—

II.—THERE IS A DIVINE WORK FOR EVERY MAN'S LIFE.

"*The works of Him that sent Me.*" What are the works which God requires us to do? Not works of any particular class, intellectual or manual, mercantile or mechanical: all these works may either be the devil's work or God's, according to the *spirit* in which they are performed. The works of God are works prompted and controlled by *supreme love* to Himself and regard for the good of His universe. "Whatsoever we do in word or deed, we should do all to the glory of God." The words suggest—

III.—THERE IS A DIVINE LIMIT TO EVERY MAN'S LIFE.

"*While it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.*" There is an appointed time for man upon earth.

First: It is very short. It is a mere "*day*." How brief is life!

Secondly: Its business is very urgent. In this day how much must be done, if it is ever done. There is business to be done in the day of our mortal life which cannot be done afterwards.

No. LXV.

THE MAN BORN BLIND.

TYPES OF CHARACTER IN RELATION TO CHRIST'S WORK.

(No. 2.)—THOSE WHO ARE ONLY SPECULATIVELY INTERESTED IN THE WORK.

"The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?" &c.—ix. 8—13.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 8.—"*The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him* (R. V. SAW HIM AFORETIME) *that he was blind*" (R. V. A BEGGAR). Here follows an account of what befell this blind man. The account is so minute, distinct, lifelike, that one must conclude that the biographer had it from the very lips of the blind man himself. "*Is not this he that sat and begged?*" It would seem that they had been in the habit of seeing him as a blind man and begging.

Ver. 9.—"*Some* (R. V. OTHERS) *said, This* (R. V. IT) *is he: others said, He is* (R. V. NO, BUT HE IS) *like him: but he said, I am he.*" The diversity of opinions is readily accounted for by the great difference in his appearance which would be made by the removal of the most deforming of blemishes, and the bestowal of the most distinguishing of features. The very difficulty which they had in believing that he was the blind beggar proves the perfection of the cure.

Ver. 10.—"*Therefore said they*

(R. V. THEY SAID THEREFORE) unto him, *How were* (R. V. HOW THEN WERE) *thine eyes opened?*" A very natural question.

Ver. 11.—"*He answered and said, A* (R. V. THE) *man that is called Jesus,*" &c. "He is therefore not acquainted with the Messianic character of Jesus. He however emphasizes the name of Jesus. He has immediately noticed the significant name, which was not the case with the impotent man of Bethesda (chap. v.). The form of his already budding faith in the prophetic dignity and Divine mission of Jesus, declares itself in verses 17 and 33; he as yet does not know Him as the Messiah (ver. 35). '*I received sight.*' 'Αναβλέπειν means to look up, to see again. Meyer maintains against Lucke's explanation, '*I looked up*' (Mark xvi. 4), the '*I received sight again.*' For this there is no ground in verses 15 and 18, although the

explanation of Grotius, '*Nec male recipere quis dicitur, quod communiter tributum humane nature ipsi abfuit,*' is ingenious."—Lange.

Ver. 12.—"*Then said they* (R. V. AND THEY SAID) *unto him, Where is He?*" From this it would appear that Jesus, after the attempt to stone Him, had retired from the Temple, and still kept Himself from the public eye. The motive for asking the question was not hostility, but a natural interest, to see and to know the author of such a work. "*He said* (R. V. SAITH), *I know not.*" The man had heard the voice, but had never seen the person of his Benefactor, until revealed in verse 37.

Ver. 13.—"*They brought* (R. V. BRING) *to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind*" (πρὸς τοὺς Φαρισαίους). Probably to the Sanhedrim, which sat daily, and the principal members of which were the leading Pharisees.

HOMILETICS.

The healing of this poor blind man was a very influential fact. As a stone cast into a lake throws the whole mass of water into agitation, producing circle after circle to its utmost bounds, this fact stirred into excitement the whole social sphere in which it occurred. It broke the monotony of ordinary life, it touched the springs of many minds, and filled the neighbourhood with strange thoughts and feelings. This is a striking illustration of the fact that no man "liveth to himself." What affects one, will affect many. Society is a chain, of which every man is a link; the motion of one link may vibrate through the whole chain. Society is a body, every man is a member; the pulsation of one heart will throb through every limb. There were circumstances connected with this man's healing, that tended to heighten its exciting power. He was well known. For many years, probably, he sat near that old temple; he had been seen by thousands who periodically visited that sacred spot, and had been the subject of remark by many a passer-by; he was a kind of institution, one of the well-settled and most notable objects in that great thoroughfare. The removing of his blindness was miraculous. Such an event had never been known before. Cases of blind men whose sight had been restored might have occurred ere then, within the knowledge of some; but this was not restoration, for he had never seen, never had a vision. It was a kind of creation; it was altogether wonderful; it stood out as one of the most marvellous things that had ever happened.

Hence the greatness of the interest awakened. The feelings produced, however, were very various.

The representative class which we have in these verses are those who are only *speculatively interested in Christ's work*. Notice three things concerning this class—

I.—THE LACK OF EARNESTNESS IN THEIR INQUIRIES.

Their inquiries were confined to three subjects.

First: To the identity of the restored man. "*Is not this he that sat and begged?*" The question seems to be asked in the mere spirit of curiosity. "*Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him.*" Their difficulty in deciding his identity would arise partly perhaps from the change that the opened eye would make in his countenance, for the eye gives a character to the face, it kindles in every feature a new glory. The human eye in the face is as the moon in the night firmament, changing the whole aspect of things. And partly, and probably mainly, from the unaccountableness of the result. Though they might have felt that in nearly every respect he was like him, yet they could not believe because of the marvellousness of the change. Their inquiries were confined—

Secondly: To the method of his restoration. "*How were thine eyes opened?*" In this question there is no ring of earnestness; it seems dictated by nothing but an ordinary curiosity. Their inquiries were confined—

Thirdly: To the whereabouts of the Restorer. "*Where is He?*" Not, What is He? All they meant was, We should like to see this Man, who has wrought such a wonderful cure. Those who have a *mere* speculative interest in Christianity are constantly asking such questions as these. Is it so and so? How did it occur? Where is the cause? And all this with no deep genuine thirst for truth. Notice—

II.—THE LACK OF GENEROSITY IN THEIR INQUIRIES.

They utter no congratulatory word to the restored man. There was no gush, as one might have expected, of sympathy and gratitude for the merciful deliverance. Had they been true men, the event would have thrilled them with emotions that would have touched them into the enthusiasm of social affection. But there is not one spark of it. Their intellect seems to move in ice. So it is ever with those who are merely speculatively interested in Christianity. There is no exultation of heart on account of the millions it has blessed. It is mere cold inquiry about details. Notice—

III.—THE LACK OF INDEPENDENCY IN THEIR INQUIRIES.

"*They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.*" They brought him to the judicial court, to try the question of his identity. They were not earnest enough in the matter to reach a

conclusion that would satisfy themselves as to his identity. In that court to which they took him there would not be much difficulty in proving that the man was not himself, but some one else. Hostile judges can prove to a servile and ignorant jury that the man who says "*I am he*," is not himself but some one else. This has been done, I think, in England only within the last few years.

CONCLUSION. Truly lamentable it is, that there are men to be found who are *only* speculatively interested in the wonderful works of Christ. What these men saw and heard should have led them to a hearty acceptance of Jesus as the true Messiah, and their consecration to Him as their Lord and Master.

NO. LXVI.

THE MAN BORN BLIND.

TYPES OF CHARACTER IN RELATION TO CHRIST'S WORK.

(No. 3.)—THOSE WHO ARE BITTERLY PREJUDICED AGAINST CHRIST'S WORK.

"And it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes," &c.—ix. 14—18.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 14.—"*And* (R. V. NOW) *it was the Sabbath day* (R. V. ON THE DAY) *when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.*" This fact, that the miracle was done on the Sabbath, is here noted in connection with the tribunal; and the making of the clay is probably mentioned as a species of labour, which their law pronounced illegal. "Jesus had certainly of set purpose chosen the Sabbath for His work of healing. He designed to give matter of offence to the Pharisees, who, by their exaggerated severity in the external rites of the Sabbath festival, sought to compensate for their lacking spiritual service. (Augustine: *Sabbatum carnaliter observabant spiritualiter sistent.*) And He would teach the people how the Sabbath was really to be used. His polemic in act was not directed against Moses, but against the caricature into which Pharisaism had turned the Mosaic Sabbath. The Sabbath was a rest from evil, as also from servile works, which centre in ourselves. But it was not to be a day of rest when the honour of God and the furtherance of our neighbour's good were concerned."—Hengstenberg.

Ver. 15.—"*Then again* (R. V. AGAIN THEREFORE) *the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight.*" This question had been propounded by the "neighbours" in verse 10. And it is again repeated by the Pharisees. "*He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.*" The answer which the man gives is according to the fact as recorded in verses 6, 7.

Ver. 16.—"*Therefore said some of the Pharisees* (R. V. SOME THEREFORE OF THE PHARISEES SAID), *This Man is not of* (R. V. FROM) *God, because He keepeth not the Sabbath day* (R. V. OMITTS DAY). *Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?*" (R. V. SIGNS.) "*Therefore.*" "That is, in consequence of the man's unflinching statement. They had hoped that he would invalidate the miracle by his testimony; but failing of this, they proceeded to invalidate it against testimony by reasonings of their own. '*Others said.*' One party said, He is a sinner; and this cannot be a miracle. The other party said, This is a miracle; so He cannot be a sinner. Had the deed truly been a sin, the reasoning of the first party would have been correct.

The premise of the second party proved, not only that Jesus was no sinner, but that He was a messenger of God."

Ver. 17.—"*They say* (R. V. THEREFORE) *unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of Him, that* (R. V. IN THAT) *He hath opened thine eyes?*" Stress is to be laid on the word "*thou.*" "*What sayest thou?*" The reply of the others was contradictory, and therefore did not satisfy inquiry. What sayest thou? No doubt, in appealing thus directly to him, they expected he would say something unfavourable to Christ. But they were disappointed. "*He said, He is a prophet.*" Without any circumlocution, he declared Him to be a "*prophet.*"

Ver. 18.—"*But the Jews* (R. V. THE JEWS THEREFORE) *did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and* (R. V. HAD) *received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.*" Thus disconcerted, failing to obtain any information that went to condemn Christ, they adopt the pretext of appealing to his parents, hoping no doubt that they could extract from them the confession that he was not "*born blind.*" They "*did not believe until they called the parents;*" not as if they would have then believed. "The meaning is, that unbelief led them to this procedure."—Hengstenberg.

HOMILETICS.

The types of character in relation to Christ's work which are represented in these verses, are *Those who are bitterly prejudiced against His work.* Such were the Pharisees. They were determined if possible to deny the fact that the man's eyes were opened; and if they failed in this, to prove that Christ was exposed to punishment because He broke the Sabbath. Four facts marked the conduct of these men.

I.—THEY WERE TECHNICAL RATHER THAN MORAL, IN THEIR STANDARD OF JUDGMENT.

"*Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because He keepeth not the Sabbath day.*" Christ had performed the miracle on the Sabbath. In this He struck a blow at the prejudices of those hypocrites, and declared, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." These Pharisees, instead of thanking God that their poor brother before them had his eyes opened, and expressing a solicitude to get a knowledge of Him Who had accomplished such a wonderful work, endeavour to make the whole thing a ceremonial crime. They had a greater respect for ceremonies than for souls. The Pharisees exalted the "letter" above the spirit, the ritual above the moral. Their sympathies were more with dead ceremonies than with living men.

Another fact which marked the conduct of these men was—

II.—THEY WERE BIASSED RATHER THAN CANDID, IN THEIR EXAMINATION OF EVIDENCE.

They made up their minds not to believe the fact; and all their examination, their questionings and cross-questionings, were intended to throw discredit upon it. They did not want evidence.

If evidence came up, they would endeavour to suppress or misinterpret it. The uncandid spirit breathes through the whole of their conduct. This endeavour to reject the truth which clashes with prejudices is, alas! too common in every age. The conduct of the Pharisees on this occasion shows the blindness of prejudiced minds and the heartlessness of technical religion.

Another fact which marked the conduct of these men was—

III.—THEY WERE DIVIDED, RATHER THAN UNITED, IN THEIR CONCLUSIONS.

“There was a division among them.” There were some, perhaps Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, touched a little with the sentiment of justice and candour, who could not but see something of the Divinity of the act. Infidels ridicule Christians for their divisions, whilst they themselves are never agreed. Error is necessarily schismatic; evil has no power to unite: it is as changeable as the chameleon. Examine the theories of infidelity. The other fact which marked the conduct of these men was—

IV.—THEY WERE MALIGNANT, RATHER THAN GENEROUS, IN THEIR AIMS.

If their purpose had been generous they would have been disposed to believe in the mission of a Divine Restorer. Instead of which, they are determined to repudiate the fact. Their heartless treatment of the young man in brow-beating him, the readiness and delight with which they seized the conclusion that Christ was a sinner, and the violence with which they cast out of the synagogue those who believed on Him, all show that the malign, and not the benign, was their inspiration.

CONCLUSION. This class of men is not extinct. There are those who are bitterly prejudiced against Christianity in every region of Christendom. The most patent facts they dispute and deny. They are proof against all argument. Prejudice turns a man into a kind of behemoth whose heart is as “firm as stone,” as hard as a piece of molten millstone. All our “sling stones” of argument are turned “with him into stubble.” He “laugheth at the shaking of your dialectic spear.”

NO. LXVII.

THE MAN BORN BLIND.

TYPES OF CHARACTER IN RELATION TO CHRIST'S WORK.

(No. 4.)—THOSE WHO PRACTICALLY IGNORE CHRIST'S WORK.

“And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind?” &c.—ix. 19—23.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 19.— *your son?* The parents are now brought forward in this ecclesiastical

court. They are compelled to give evidence on the question before the Sanhedrim. What the court wanted the parents to depose was, that it was a great mistake to suppose that he was born blind, that he was only a little dim, and that having washed in Siloam he had been cured. "*Is this your son, who ye say was born blind?*" This is the first question they put. This they could not deny. The fact was too patent, they had already admitted it. They had a strong temptation to deny it.

Ver. 20.—"*His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind.*" Here they declare the two facts that he was their son, and that he was born blind. "Thus," says *Chrysostom*, "the truth becomes strengthened by the very snares which are laid against it. A lie is its own antagonist, and by its attempts to injure the truth sets it off to greater advantage. So was it here. For the point which might have been urged, viz. that the neighbours knew nothing for certain, but spake from a mere resemblance, is cut off by the introduction of the parents, who could of course testify of their own son."

Ver. 21.—"*But by what means (R. v. HOW) he now seeth, we know not.*" This is their reply to the third question, viz. "How then doth he now see?" "*Or who hath opened his eyes, we know not.*" Here is an evasion. "Yet they hint that they have heard of one who has opened his eyes." "*He is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.*" "The son must speak for himself. The whole reply is characteristic of parents who are honest and sensible, but at the same time timidly and selfishly cautious. Something of their son's intellectual humour is perceptible in their answer, which,

however, especially testifies to their pride that their son has wit enough to give them correct information with regard to the last question. The thrice-repeated *αὐτὸς* (*αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς, αὐτὸν, αὐτὸς*) is in the highest degree significant. On the one hand it tells of their confidence in their son, but on the other hand, also of their fear. That they hereby jeopardize him or leave him in the lurch, is truly a selfish trait. They lack strength to prove their gratitude for the healing of their son by uniting their testimony to his, although they clearly indicate by the tartness and touchiness of their reply, but they are thoroughly observant of the bad intentions of the inquisitors."

—*Lange*.

Ver. 22.—"*These words spake (R. v. SAID) his parents, because they feared the Jews.*" Standing before such an august tribunal, brow-beaten, and knowing the consequences of their avowal, they had not the courage to declare the fact. "*For the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did (R. v. SHOULD) confess that He was (R. v. HIM TO BE) Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.*" "There were two or three kinds or degrees of excommunication among the Jews. The lighter species consisted of a kind of suspension from some of the privileges of worship and social intercourse, while the heavier was an utter and final exclusion, attended with terrible curses and maledictions that were pronounced in the fearful words, *Anathema Maranatha* (1 Cor. xvi. 22)."

Ver. 23.—"*Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.*" At the age of thirteen, among the Jews, a person was qualified to give evidence on disputed points. In this way the parents exposed their son to the danger from which they shrunk.

HOMILETICS.

The previous paragraphs of this chapter we employed to illustrate three classes of men in relation to the work of Christ; viz. those who consciously need His work, those who are speculatively interested in His work, and those who are malignantly prejudiced against His work.

These words we shall use to illustrate another class; viz. *Those who practically ignore His work.* This class is represented by the parents, who were called into court, and who, instead of avowing that Christ had given eyesight to their son, evaded the question for fear of the Jews. That they felt some interest in Christ can scarcely be doubted. He Who had conferred such a benefit on their son could scarcely fail to attract their special attention, and to have made on them some special impression. But their interest in Him was not strong enough to make them courageous for the truth. They practically ignored Him. The great majority of men in England, aye, in Christendom, belong to this class. They have no strong prejudice against Christ, still less are they malignant opponents; but they lack that vital interest in Him necessary to induce them to avow Him. We offer three remarks in relation to this class, as suggested by the conduct of these parents.

I.—THEY IGNORED CHRIST'S WORK, ALTHOUGH THEY HAD EVERY OPPORTUNITY OF KNOWING IT.

It cannot be doubted for a moment that these parents had the means of knowing Christ. He was no stranger in the neighbourhood. Often, in all probability, they had seen Him, heard Him speak, and witnessed some of His beneficent works. They were present, too, without doubt, when He wrought the miracle on their son; and from the lips of their son, we may infer from the sequel, they had heard, with the emphasis of gratitude and delight, the marvel which Jesus of Nazareth had wrought. This is the case with the millions that belong to this class; they practically ignore Him, not because they lack opportunities of knowing the mighty works He has achieved and is still achieving. Wherever they look, they can discover monuments of His beneficent operations. In every social circle which they enter, they can scarcely fail to find some faithful disciple who will proclaim and extol His name. Another remark in relation to this class, as suggested by these parents, is—

II.—THEY IGNORED CHRIST'S WORK, WHEN GRATITUDE SHOULD HAVE URGED THEM TO ACKNOWLEDGE IT.

Under what an obligation had He placed these parents, in conferring on their son the inestimable privilege of vision! By this He had not only given their child a new world of enjoyment, but had given him a capacity to contribute to their comfort and interests in such a way as he never could have done in a state of blindness. One might have thought that common gratitude would have impelled them, not only to acknowledge Him, but to glory in His name. Have not all the members of this class in Christendom, and especially in England, the strongest reasons for cherishing

gratitude to Christ? All that is salutary and righteous in their government, all that is pure and ennobling in their literature, all that is fair and honest in their commerce, all that is true and loving in their friendships, all that is progressive in their intelligence, morality, and happiness, must be ascribed to Him. Take from England to-day all that she owes to Christ, and you will leave her in all the ignorance, the confusion, horrors, and cruelties of the heathen districts of the world. What base ingratitude, then, to ignore Christ! Another remark in relation to this class as suggested by these parents, is—

III.—THEY IGNORED CHRIST'S WORK, FROM A COWARDLY MEANNESS OF SOUL.

"They feared the Jews." They were afraid of the Sanhedrim; they were afraid to be truthful, honest, and hence their reply, *"He is of age; ask him."* They were willing for their son to bear alone all the danger that the avowal of the truth would entail.

Why do members of this class now ignore Christ? Does not selfish fear lie at the root of their baseness—fear of losing property, sacrificing friendships, and injuring their position and their influence? Fear, that prompted Peter to deny Christ, inspires the multitudes to ignore Him. Strange to say, thousands who have the courage to confront an army, are too cowardly to avow Christ. *"He that is ashamed of Me and of My cause,"* &c.

"The cure of the blind man," says *Sears*, "and the incidents and conversations which followed thereupon, are transactions as full of nature as they can hold. Here was a miracle right under the eye of the Sanhedrim, and in the Temple court, and the people have seen it. It will not do to arrest and execute this man, unless the fact can be accounted for or explained away. They appeal to the parents, hoping the parents will deny that there was any blindness in the case. They evade most ingeniously, and are non-committal. All we know about it is, that he was born blind, and that he now sees. Who opened his eyes? *'He is of age; ask him.'* Then follow the cross-examination of the young man himself, and his excommunication, and the rebuke of Jesus to the Pharisees for their own incurable blindness, ascending as usual from natural things to spiritual. The miracle is only the nucleus of a whole texture of natural events, and the discoursings which proceed from them, which are indissolubly bound together with the plainest marks of historic certainty, and the most subtle shadings of human character."

No. LXVIII.

THE MAN BORN BLIND.

TYPES OF CHARACTER IN RELATION TO CHRIST'S WORK.

(No. 5).—THOSE WHO ARE CONSCIOUSLY RESTORED BY THE WORK.

"Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise," &c.—ix. 24—38.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 24.—*"Then again called they* (R. V. SO THEY CALLED A SECOND TIME) *the man that was blind."* Calling him the second time indicates that he had been excluded from the court during the examination of his parents. They were rigorous in their judicial procedure. *"And said unto him, Give God the praise"* (R. V. GLORY TO GOD). This is not to be taken, we presume, as a devout exhortation, calling upon him to thank Jehovah and to give no attention to the impostor who he thought had cured him, but it is the language of adjuration, obliging him, on a solemn oath, to tell the truth. They wished to overawe him, so that he might declare what they desired, which was, that *"this Man is a sinner."*

Ver. 25.—*"He answered* (R. V. THEREFORE ANSWERED) *and said, Whether He be a sinner or no, I know not."* He is not to be shaken from the truth. Without taking upon himself to discuss with the judges as to whether the "Man" was a sinner or not, he declares his experience: *"One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."* They could not dissuade him from a fact of which he was conscious.

Ver. 26.—*"Then said they to him again* (R. V. THEY SAID THEREFORE UNTO HIM), *What did He to thee? how opened He thine eyes?"* They seemed to despair of making him deny the miracle, and now they question him as to how the work was done. And this, no doubt, to bring out the charge again, that He was a Sabbath-breaker.

Ver. 27.—*"He answered them, I have told you already* (R. V. I TOLD YOU EVEN NOW), *and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will* (R. V. WOULD) *ye also be* (R. V.

BECOME) *His disciples?"* The man perseveres in maintaining his ground, unterrified by the dangers hanging over his head, until at last, provoked by their repeated and wearisome interrogation, he loses his patience, and puts the ironical and irritating question, whether they wish to be "this Man's followers."

Vers. 28, 29.—*"Then* (R. V. AND) *they reviled him, and said, Thou art His disciple; but we are Moses' disciples* (R. V. DISCIPLES OF MOSES). *We know that God spake* (R. V. HATH SPOKEN) *unto Moses: as for This Fellow* (R. V. MAN), *we know not from whence He is."* His manliness heightens their indignation, and they break out in taunts and censures against him, and declare their adhesion to Moses. Dost thou ask us to become His disciples—the disciples of an impostor? We are the disciples of Moses. We know that Moses was sent by God, and that his doctrines are true and Divine. *"As for This Fellow, we know not from whence He is."*

Ver. 30.—*"The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing* (R. V. THE MARVEL), *that ye know not from whence He is, and yet He hath opened mine eyes."* *"Why herein,"* for herein, is a "marvellous thing." As if he had said, You believe that whoever performs a miracle must be sent from God. My cure is confessedly a miracle, and yet you say you know not "from whence He is."

Ver. 31.—*"Now we know that God heareth not sinners,"* &c. A miracle not only proves that He is Divine, but that He is pure from sin, for God does not hear sinners, and no one can perform a miracle but by the power of God.

Vers. 32, 33.—*"Since the world began was it not* (R. V. IT WAS NEVER) *heard*

that any man (R. V. ONE) opened the eyes of one (R. V. A MAN) that was born blind. If this Man were not of (R. V. FROM) God, He could do nothing." What he means is, Here is a great miracle, such a thing as had never occurred before; and the doer of the miracle must be from God.

Ver. 34.—"They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?" All along, these Pharisees had assumed that this man's blindness was a punishment for his sin: they go beyond this now, and declare he was "born in sins," that he was thoroughly depraved in body and soul. "And dost thou," thus so constitutionally vile, "teach us?" "And they cast him out." This was according to their threat (ver. 22). They excommunicated him, thrust him, not only from the court-room, but from the synagogue, the temple, and from all worship.

Ver. 35.—"Jesus heard that they had cast him out." Christ heard of his expulsion, and hastened in search of him. "And when He had found him (R. V. FINDING HIM), He said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

Davidson translates, "Son of man." That is, the Messiah. This voice the blind man had heard before in the words, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." No doubt he at once recognized its tones.

Ver. 36.—"He answered and said, Who (R. V. AND WHO) is He, Lord, that I might (R. V. MAY) believe on Him?" As if he had said, I am ready to believe on Him if I knew Him; but I must know who He is.

Vers. 37, 38.—"And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh (R. V. HE IT IS THAT SPEAKETH) with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him." It is remarkable that Jesus declared Himself as the Messiah to the woman of Samaria, to His disciples, and now to this man, while He made no such explicit announcement to the Jews at large. The reason, no doubt, was, that He would not subject Himself to the tumult incident upon making such a profession to the mass of the people. "Worshipped Him." Paid Him obeisance, probably by prostrating himself on the ground according to the Eastern manner.

HOMILETICS.

We have already noticed four classes of persons in relation to the work of Christ as suggested by this chapter—those who consciously need His work, those who are speculatively interested in His work, those who are malignantly prejudiced against His work, and those who practically ignore His work.

The verses now before us suggest another class, viz. *those who are consciously restored by the work of Christ*. The young man himself is the type of that class. He was blind, and now he saw. Not only was there in his case the restoration of physical vision, but of spiritual. He met Christ, "And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him." We find this man doing two things which characterize all who are spiritually restored by Christ.

I. MAINTAINING TRUTH IN THE FACE OF FIERCE OPPOSITION.

Nothing could exceed the determination of these rulers to reject the fact that this blind beggar was restored by Christ. After having had him before them once, and questioned and cross-questioned him, in order to destroy the credibility of the fact, and having summoned to their presence afterwards his parents with

the same attempts, and again been thwarted, they recall the young man, and try in every way to get rid of Jesus Christ as the Restorer. But see how he holds his own.

First: He maintained the truth in a noble spirit. His conduct stands in sublime contrast to that of his parents and others concerning this matter.

Mark his *candour*. Hearing men disputing about the miracle, some saying he was like the blind man, and others that he was the blind man, without mincing or hesitation, he exclaims, "*I am he.*" Outspokenness is the ring of a great nature. Mark his *courage*. In defiance of the prejudices and the wishes of the Sanhedrim, he declares repeatedly that Jesus, Whom they hated, wrought the cure. The genuine alone are brave: honest souls dread a lie more than the frowns of a thousand despots. Mark his *consistency*. In spite of all the questions, cross-questions, and brow-beating he never varies in his statements. He never flinches from his first assertion. He is consistent throughout. His honest soul, though put through hottest furnaces, will come out nothing but metal. Truth is that subtle element which alone gives unity to all the varied parts of a man's life. Error makes man contradict himself, makes his utterances and deeds jostle against each other like logs of wood on the dashing wave. Verily the spirit which this young man manifested throughout is noble, and shows that the most abject poverty, aggravated by blindness, does not necessarily unman the soul. There may be grandeur of soul where there is social obscurity and physical infirmity.

Secondly: He maintained the truth by sound argument. (1.) His argument was built upon consciousness. "*He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.*" No one could convince him to the contrary. All the new sensations that the light of heaven had poured into him rose in rebellion against any doubt on the subject. The logic of a college of Aristotles could not disturb his conviction. It is so with the true Christian: he *feels* the change, and no argument can touch it. (2.) His argument was formulated by common sense. His judges pressing him again with the question, "*What did He do to thee? how opened He thine eyes?*" he reproves them for repeating the questions which he had already answered; and with withering irony says, "*Will ye also be His disciples?*" He states his argument thus:—that his cure, of which he was conscious, was a miracle. "*Herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence He is, and yet He hath opened mine eyes.*" Here is a miracle of which I am conscious, which you cannot deny, and you ask whence He is that wrought it? Is it not a doctrine with you, that no one who has not Divine authority can perform miracles? Why ask such questions? He goes on to state that

not only had the Author of the miracle Divine authority, but also a *holy* character. "*Now we know that God heareth not sinners.*"

Such is the spirit of the argument with which this man maintained the truth in the face of fierce opposition; and all men who are consciously renewed will in some such way defend the truth. They will exemplify a noble spirit, and will employ arguments drawn from their own experience—arguments which to themselves no logic can refute.

Another thing which we find this man doing, which characterizes all who are spiritually restored by Christ, is—

II.—FOLLOWING CHRIST WHEN CAST OUT FROM MEN.

Noble as was his spirit, and strong as were his arguments, instead of convincing his judges, he only irritated them, and intensified their opposition. "*They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins: and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.*" The best men in every age are always "cast out" by the ungodly. But, when cast out, what became of him?

First: Christ sought him. "*Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him.*" Christ found him out. Sometimes men seem to have found Christ out by their own searching; such was the case with Zaccheus and blind Bartimeus. But here Christ finds the man out, as He found out the woman of Samaria, irrespective of his search.

Secondly: Christ revealed Himself to him. "*He,*" that is Jesus, "*said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee.*" Christ must show Himself, to be known.

Thirdly: Christ was followed by him. "*And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him.*" Out with the world, and in with Christ. Calvin says: "We have known the same thing in our own time; for when *Dr. Martin Luther*, and others of the same class, were beginning to reprove the grosser abuses of the Pope, they scarcely had the slightest relish for pure Christianity. But after the Pope had cast them out of the Roman synagogue by terrific Bulls, Christ stretched forth His hand and made Himself fully known to them."

No. LXIX.

CHRIST'S MISSION TO THE WORLD.

"And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind," &c.—ix. 39—41.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 39.— *come* (R. V. CAME I) *into this world,*
 "And Jesus said, For judgment I am *that they which see not might* (R. V.

MAY) see." Rising to that sight of which the natural vision communicated to the youth was but the symbol. "*And that they which see might be made* (R. V. MAY BECOME) *blind.*" "Judicially incapable of apprehending and receiving the truth to which they have wilfully shut their eyes."—Brown.

Ver. 40.—"*And some* (R. V. THOSE) *of the Pharisees which were with Him heard these words* (R. V. THINGS), *and said unto Him, Are we blind also?*" "We, the authorized guides of the country in spiritual things, '*are we blind?*'" "Jesus was here, as usual in His visits, surrounded by an immense multitude. (Comp. ch. x. 19—21.) Among these were found a number of Pharisees who were wont to follow the Lord as spies, and watch all His steps and movements (Luke xi. 54; xiv. 1). These well understood that the declaration of Jesus bore the character of a challenge, and was meant for them. They also rightly discerned that, if they were to become blind through Christ's manifestation, it must follow that they had been before, although in a certain sense seeing, yet in another and more im-

portant sense blind; just as in Matt. xv. 14 they were exhibited as blind leaders of the blind, apart from their relation to Christ, through which they only became more blind. For nothing but such a previously existing blindness could, as being misunderstood and denied, bring down upon them the judgment of blindness. And it was this charge on the part of Christ that excited the pride of the Pharisees to the extreme of rebellion. But this moral perturbation was itself a proof how well grounded was the reproach. 'It was a manifest sign of their blindness,' says Quesnel, 'that they knew not that they were blind.'"
—Hengstenberg.

Ver. 41.—"*Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should* (R. V. WOULD) *have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.*" This seems to mean, If you were spiritually blind for want of capacity, or means to obtain sight, ye would have no sin; as in chap. xv. 22. "*No sin;*" that is, none of the guilt of shutting out the light. But inasmuch as you say that you do see, that you claim vision, and at the same time you are rejecting Me, you seal your guilt of unbelief.

HOMILETICS.

These verses present to us *Christ's Mission*. Christ Himself tells us why He came into the world; and it is certainly well to have an explanation of the reason of His advent from His own lips. In relation to His advent, as here stated, two remarks are suggested.

I.—THAT HIS MISSION TO THE WORLD HAS TWO APPARENTLY OPPOSITE RESULTS.

It was to give sight, and to make blind. "*That they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.*"

First: The one result is the greatest *blessing*; the other, the greatest *curse*. "*That they which see not might see.*" All men in an unregenerate state are spiritually blind: God and the great spiritual universe are as much concealed from them as the ten thousand objects and beauties of this mundane scene are from those who from their birth have been physically blind. They walk in darkness, and have no light. They grope their way through this life and stumble on into the great future. A greater blessing is not conceivable than the opening of the spiritual eye. It involves the translation of the soul into the real Paradise of being. This

Christ came to do, this was His purpose. The other result is a great curse. "*That they which see might be made blind.*" Which means this:—that those who are unconscious of their blindness, and conceitedly fancy they see, are still stone-blind, and would be incalculably injured. By rejecting the remedial agency of Christ, they would augment their guilt and intensify their moral gloom. These two results of Christ's mission are taking place every day. The Gospel must prove either the "savour of life unto life," or of "death unto death."

Secondly: The one result is *intentional*, the other *incidental*. The grand purpose of Christ was, to give spiritual illumination. He came to preach "the recovery of sight to the blind." But the other result is *incidental*, and directly opposed to His supreme aim. It comes because Christ does not coerce men, does not interfere with their liberty, treats them as free agents, and also because of the perversity of the unregenerate heart. Spiritual illumination takes place *by* His will, spiritual blindness *against* His will. In both cases the human will is free. As men may get food out of the earth or poison, fire out of the sun that shall burn them to ashes, or a genial light that shall cheer and invigorate them, so men might get salvation or damnation out of Christ's mission. It is suggested—

II.—THAT HIS MISSION TO THE WORLD IS MISINTERPRETED AND ABUSED.

First: Misinterpreted. "*And some of the Pharisees which were with Him heard these words, and said unto Him, Are we blind also?*" Dost Thou mean to say that *we*—educated men trained in the laws and religion of our forefathers and devoted to the work of teaching the nation—are *blind*? They did not seem to understand that our Saviour meant by spiritual blindness, blindness of heart. So it has ever been. Men misinterpret the grand purpose of Christ's mission. Some treat the Gospel as if its grand object is to give a speculative creed, an ecclesiastical polity, a civil government, or a social order and refinement, while they practically ignore the fact that its *grand* object is to open the spiritual eyes of men, so that they may see, not the mere forms and phenomena of being, but the spiritual realities that underlie all existing substances. His mission to the world is—

Secondly: Abused. "*Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.*" Notwithstanding My mission, "*ye say, We see.*" With Me you have the opportunity of being spiritually illuminated; if you had not such an opportunity, your blindness would be a tremendous calamity, but now it is a crime. "*Therefore your sin remaineth.*" If, like the man whose physical eyes I have just

opened, you were without the power of seeing, and had not the opportunity of being cured, you would have no sin; for no man is required to use a power he does not possess. Your spiritual blindness is a crime. What should we think of a man living in the midst of beautiful scenery, with the light of heaven streaming on him every day, and possessing eyes healthy and powerful enough to descry all the beauties, but refusing day after day for years to open those eyes? We should say he was either mad or under the influence of some strange enchantment. But the case of men who are spiritually blind, with the faculties of reason and conscience and the sun of the Gospel streaming on them, is worse than this. "Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil."

No. LXX.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber," &c.—x. 1—16.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 1.—"*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold (R. V. FOLD OF THE SHEEP), but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.*" This discourse on the Good Shepherd seems a continuation of the closing verses of the preceding chapter. The figure of a shepherd and sheep was familiar to the Jewish ear (see Jer. xxiii.; Ezek. xxxiv.; Zech. xi. &c.). "This simple creature, the sheep," says Luther, as quoted by Stier, 'has this special note among all animals, that it quickly hears the voice of the shepherd, follows no one else, depends entirely on him, and seeks help from him alone, cannot help itself, but is shut up to another's aid.'"—Dr. Brown. Christ here exposes the hypocrisy of the religious teachers of the Jews, by stating what He as a true Teacher was. "*The shepherd that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, the same is a thief and a robber.*" He means to say that there were such shepherds, He was not. In all ages there have been those who have intruded themselves into the Church of God as pastors.

Ver. 2.—"*But he that entereth in*

by the door is the shepherd of the sheep." "There is a right and legitimate way into this high office, and he who enters through that way is the true shepherd."

Ver. 3.—"*To him the porter openeth.*" To him the man authorized to guard the entrance gives a free and ready access. "*And the sheep hear his voice.*" In the East the shepherd and his flock are so identified that they easily detect his voice from all other human voices. "*He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.*" As we give names to some of our cattle, so the Eastern shepherd gives names to each of his flock; he calleth them by name and they follow him.

Ver. 4.—"*And when he putteth forth his own sheep (R. V. WHEN HE HATH PUT FORTH ALL HIS OWN), he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.*" In this country, and in Greece, the shepherds drive the sheep before them. But not so in the East. There is a closer affinity between them, and the sheep follow him.

Ver. 5.—"*And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.*" Strangers will frighten them away.

"What is said in these three verses, though admitting of important *application* to every faithful shepherd of God's flock, is in its direct and highest sense true only of the 'Great Shepherd of the sheep,' who in the first five verses seems plainly, under the simple character of a true shepherd, to be drawing His own portrait."—*Brown*.

Ver. 6.—"*This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which He spake unto them.*" What Christ said was totally incomprehensible to the Pharisees because of the idea which they entertained of their office.

Ver. 7.—"*Then said Jesus (R. V. JESUS SAID THEREFORE) unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.*" Here is the explanation, which He introduces in a solemn way. "*Verily, verily.*" "Christ is both the Door and the Shepherd and everything; no one else can suffice."—*Bengel*.

Ver. 8.—"*All that ever came (R. V. ALL THAT CAME) before Me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.*" Does He mean by this, that all religious teachers that preceded Him—the patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets—were unauthorized teachers? Such was the interpretation of the ancient Gnostics, a professedly Christian sect. Dr. Davidson's translation, "All that ever came are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not hear them," does not meet the difficulty. But Dr. Lange's, "All that ever came instead of Me (*ἡλθον πρὸ ἐμοῦ*) are thieves and robbers," does. All who profess to take Christ's place, to fulfil His mission, are thieves and robbers. The words, I think, must be taken as they stand. There is no authority for any alteration.

Ver. 9.—"*I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out (R. V. GO OUT), and find (R. V. SHALL FIND) pasture.*" Shall go in and out into all the duties and privileges of life freely, and find safety and nourishment in all.

Ver. 10.—"*The thief cometh not, but for to (R. V. THAT HE MAY) steal, and to kill, and to destroy.*" False

teachers are dishonest and destructive to the Church of God. "*I am come (R. V. CAME) that they might (R. V. MAY) have life, and that they might (R. V. MAY) have it more (R. V. OMITTS MORE) abundantly,*" or in more abundance. The true Shepherd comes, not only to give them true life, but true life in abundance.

Ver. 11.—"*I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth (R. V. LAYETH DOWN) his life for the sheep.*" I, *Ἐγώ* emphatically repeated, am the ideal Shepherd (Ps. xxiii.; Isa. xl. 11; Ezek. xxxiv. 11).

Vers. 12, 13.—"*But he that is an hireling, and not the (R. V. A) shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth (R. V. BEHOLDETH) the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth (R. V. SNATCHETH) them, and scattereth the sheep*" (R. V. THEM). The hireling, the man who does his work for filthy lucre, is no true shepherd. He does not care for the flock, but for the fleece. Hence, when the wolf or any threatening destroyer appears, scattering the sheep, the hireling, instead of risking his life, fleeth.

Ver. 14.—"*I am the good Shepherd, and know My sheep (R. V. I KNOW MINE OWN), and am known of Mine*" (R. V. MINE OWN KNOW ME). "The proof of this character: *I know them that are Mine*; and the fact of the indissoluble connection with the flock, with true believers, whom the Father has given Him, here expressed by the relation of *mutual acquaintance*. True, this knowing does not mean *loving*; but it is still an emphatic expression, by which a loving knowledge is implied. It is the expression of the personal, Divine cognition of kindred personalities. The grace of Christ is such a cognition of His own on His part. Faith, on the other hand, is a corresponding cognition of Christ on their part."—*Lange*.

Ver. 15.—"*As the Father (R. V. EVEN AS THE FATHER) knoweth Me, even so know I (R. V. AND I KNOW) the Father.*" This verse is connected with the former, and the idea seems to be, that there is some similitude between the mutual love subsisting between Him and His Father. "*I lay down My*

life for the sheep." So far from being an hireling, He is self-sacrificing to the highest degree.

Ver. 16.—"*And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold* (R.

V. SHALL BECOME ONE FLOCK), *and one Shepherd.*" "*Other sheep!*" Who are they? Undoubtedly the Gentiles, the heathen. Christ has an invisible Church even in heathendom. All good men will one day meet and form one fold, and have one Shepherd.

HOMILETICS.

Let us gather up all the wonderful things that are said here by this Good Shepherd Himself concerning His flock. At the outset, we have here to remark on the amazing *self-assertion* of Christ. "*I am the good Shepherd,*" He says, and more,—He proclaims all that ever came before Him as "*thieves and robbers.*" Nor is this self-assertion here singular in Christ's utterances. Elsewhere He says, "*I am the Light of the world;*" "*I am the Bread of Life.*" Again, "*I am the Resurrection,*" &c. &c. Were any mere man to speak of himself in this way, we should denounce him as an inflated egotist. And yet His title, "*Son of God,*" the wonders He performed, His resurrection from the dead, &c., all seem to justify such utterances from Him. They chime in with His whole biography. But what does He say Himself about the "*Good Shepherd*"?

I.—THAT THE "GOOD SHEPHERD" APPROACHES HIS FLOCK IN AN HONEST WAY.

He does not, like "*the thief*" and the robber, scale the fences, but He "*entereth in through the door.*" Christ comes to men *honestly*. He declares who He is, and every part of His life furnishes the credentials. There is not the slightest shadow of the cunning, the dissimulating, the sophistic, which characterize all impostors. His statements are unmistakable, His character transparent, His whole life as open as the day. He stands before humanity and challenges their most rigorous scrutiny. To all He says, "*Which of you convinceth Me of sin?*" No religious teacher so interpretable in His utterances, so frank in His life, as Jesus of Nazareth. He "*entereth in through the door;*" He deals with men *honestly*. He teaches—

II.—THAT THE "GOOD SHEPHERD" AND HIS FLOCK MUTUALLY RECOGNIZE EACH OTHER.

"*The porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.*" "In this northern England," says Robertson, "it is hard to get the living associations of the East, or the relation between the shepherd and the sheep. The pastoral life and duty in the East is very unlike that of the shepherds on our bleak hill-

sides and downs. Here the connection between the shepherd and the sheep is simply one of pecuniary interest. Ask an English shepherd about his flock, he can tell you the numbers and their value; he knows the market in which each was purchased, and the remunerating price at which it can be disposed of. They are before him so much stock, convertible into so much money. Beneath the burning skies and the clear starry nights of Palestine, there grows up between the shepherd and his flock an union of attachment and tenderness. It is the country where at any moment sheep are liable to be swept away by some mountain torrent, or carried off by hill-robbers, or torn by wolves. At any moment their protector may have to save them by personal hazard. The shepherd-king tells us how, in defence of his father's flock, he slew a lion and a bear; and Jacob reminds Labán how, when he watched Labán's sheep in the day, the drought continued. Every hour of the shepherd's life is risk. Sometimes for the sake of an armful of grass, in the parched summer days, he must climb precipices almost perpendicular, and stand on a narrow ledge of rocks, where the wild goat will scarcely venture. Pitiless showers, driving snows, long hours of thirst; all this he must endure, if the flock is to be kept at all. And then there grows up between the man and the dumb creatures he protects a kind of friendship. For this is, after all, the true school in which love is taught—dangers mutually shared, and hardships borne together; these are the things which make generous friendship—risk cheerfully encountered for another's sake. You love those for whom you risk, and they love you; therefore it is that, not as here, where the flock is driven, the shepherd goes before, and the sheep follow him. They follow him in perfect trust, even though he should be leading them away from green pasture, by a rocky road, to another pasture which they cannot yet see. He knows them all, their separate histories, their ailments, their characters."

"*He leadeth them out.*" He does not drive them. He always goes before His disciples. He is always in advance. They follow Him; there is a moral magnetism; they know His voice. "*They know his voice, and a stranger will they not follow.*" As the loving child knows the tones of a mother's voice, the genuine disciple recognizes the voice of Christ. They cannot be deceived. There is a spiritual instinct that is an infallible guide—the instinct of love, the instinct of intense mutual sympathy. He teaches—

III.—THAT THE "GOOD SHEPHERD" IS TO HIS FLOCK THE MEDIUM OF ALL GOOD.

"*I am the door.*" "*Then said Jesus unto them again, . . . I am the door of the sheep.* All that ever came before Me are thieves*

* See Germ, p. 285.

and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. *I am the Door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.*" This could be explained philosophically.

First: Without supreme sympathy with God, no man can find real liberty, safety, and nourishment in anything. A man whose heart is dominated by love to the mighty Maker of the universe, can "*go in and out*" everywhere, into business and out of business, into church and out of church, into literature and out of literature, into recreation and out of recreation, and not only feel *free*, but be *safe* and *nourished*. But no man without this love can do it. He will feel more or less fettered in everything, in peril everywhere, and lacking the true food of his being.

Secondly: Without Christ, no man can get this supreme sympathy with God. He alone can generate it. This He has done in millions of instances, this He is doing now, hence He is the "*door*." He is the door into the enjoyment of nature, life, and God. "*I am the door: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.*" He teaches—

IV.—THAT THE "GOOD SHEPHERD" HAS SELF-SACRIFICING LOVE FOR HIS FLOCK.

"*The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.*" The Church in all ages has had pastors that have acted the "*thief*." They have been religious impostors and crafty priests. It has had those, too, who have acted the *hireling*, doing their work merely for filthy lucre, mercenary ministers.

"The hungry sheep look up and are not fed."

It has had those, also, that have acted the wolf. Like Laud and Bonner, they have been bloody persecutors, devouring the flock. In sublime contrast with this, Jesus says, "*I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly.*" He came, not only to give them life and happiness, but abundance or fulness of an endless felicity. He teaches—

V.—THAT THE "GOOD SHEPHERD" HAS AN INTERPRETING SYMPATHY WITH HIS FLOCK.

Love alone can interpret love. "If any man love God, the same is known of Him" (1 Cor. viii. 3). "*I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down My life for the sheep.*" This means, We know each other as the Father and I know each other, by a deep mysterious sympathy. Elevating and consolatory

* See Germ, p. 288.

is the fact that Christ not only knows His disciples—knows all about each, all the actualities and possibilities of their being—but He reads their hearts—knows their inner selves. “*He calleth His own sheep by name.*” As God gave names to all the hosts of heaven and knows all about them, so Christ has given names to His disciples. He knows not only who they are and where they are, but *what* they are, and what they will be through all the ages of the future.

“As the good shepherd leads his sheep
Through paths secure,
And, while a-fold by night they sleep,
Doth keep them sure ;
So the true Shepherd, Christ, our souls doth guide,
Safe in His eye, protected by His side.”

He teaches—

VI.—THAT THE “GOOD SHEPHERD” GATHERS HIS SHEEP,
WHEREVER THEY ARE, INTO THE COMMON FOLD.

“*And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold : them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice ; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.*” “*Other sheep I have.*” Where are they ? Where are they not ? Is there a tribe or a race under heaven where they are not found ? “They shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down” with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

“I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands” (Rev. vii. 9).

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. XXXVI.

CHRIST THE DOOR.

“I am the door.”—x. 9.

Wonderful is the condescension as well as the wisdom of Christ in representing Himself to man under a vast variety of imagery. He not only selects some of the grandest objects in nature, the loftiest offices in social life, and the greatest things in human art, to set forth some aspects of His transcendent character, but also some of the most insignificant objects are chosen to emblemize Himself. Here, for example, He speaks of Himself as the “*door.*” Using the figure we observe—

I.—HE IS THE “DOOR” INTO THE FULL ENJOYMENT OF
NATURE.

We lay it down as a fact that admits of no rational debate, that supreme sympathy with the Creator is an essential qualification for

a full enjoyment of nature. The impression which a beautiful painting makes upon us is wondrously heightened by a love for the artist : our admiration for a noble poem is strongly intensified by a love for the author. Productions looked upon through a love for the author have attributes of power and fascination of which otherwise they are entirely destitute. Men of poetic sensibility may be charmed with certain features and phases of nature ; men of science may admire the exquisite wisdom displayed in infinite variety in all its arrangements ; but it is only the man whose soul is filled with a supreme love for his Maker that can enter fully into its enjoyments. Nature to him is the production and the photogram of the chief object of his love, the garden in which his spirit walks in the cool of the day, and feels all to be vocal with the loving sentiments of his Father. Now who can generate this supreme sympathy in the human heart towards its Maker but Christ ? This He does—(1.) By the most powerful demonstration of Divine love : and (2.) By the most commanding manifestation of Divine excellence.

II.—HE IS THE “DOOR” INTO AN UNDERSTANDING OF PROVIDENTIAL DISPENSATIONS.

Heaven’s system of dealing with man in this world is a long series of insoluble inquiries viewed apart from Christ. There is no way of reconciling its ever-transpiring events either with our innate sense of justice, *à priori* conclusions of reason, or with our deductions of expediency as drawn from the experience of mankind. Now Christ teaches two things concerning Providence which gives a grand consistency to the whole system.

First: He teaches that it is *mediatory*. He gives us to understand through the whole of His Gospel that men are not dealt with here now on the ground of their own character, but on the ground of merciful *mediation*.

Secondly : He teaches that it is *disciplinary*. His Gospel gives us the idea that human life here is a school for the ignorant, a hospital for the diseased, &c. Hence the mingling of so much of the painful with the agreeable. “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment,” &c.

III.—HE IS THE “DOOR” INTO A TRUE MEMBERSHIP WITH THE CHURCH.

Some would represent the *Church* as the door of Christ. This is a great mistake. By the Church of course I do not mean a mere ecclesiastical institution, whether Papal, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Independent, or Wesleyan. Into such, men may and do enter, by subscription to certain dogmas and submission to certain rites. But by the Church I mean the great community of regenerated

spirits who are represented as the friends of Christ, the children of God.

Members of this *community* are limited to no particular ecclesiastical system; they are in heaven as well as on earth. They are the saved ones; they are the flock of which Christ is the Shepherd, the kingdom of which Christ is the King. This is the Church, and none other. Now it is obvious that into this Church none can enter but through Christ. He is "*the door*": through Him and Him only men are regenerated in spirit, adopted into the family of heaven, and saved from all that imperils the interest and the happiness of their souls. The Church is not the "*door*" to Christ, nor is any priesthood the "*door*" to the Church. Christ is "*the door*." We do not ask what conventional Church you have entered, for all are more or less defective; but we ask, Have you entered the Church of which you are a member through this "*Door*"? If so, well.

IV.—HE IS THE "DOOR" INTO THE UNIVERSAL PARADISE OF GOD.

Through Christ man comes into the possession of "all things." "All things are yours," said the apostle. The Christian man has a priceless property, and a vital interest in all things—all things in this world, and in the world to come also. The kingdom of universal goodness is prepared for him; he enters even into the "joy of his Lord," and sits down upon the throne with Him. He has access direct to that fruit of the tree of life, which is at once the ornament and sustenance of the spiritual universe. He has access to that river which rolls from beneath the throne of God. This is heaven, and Christ is the "Way"—the only Way thereto. Not one of all the millions of sainted spirits above has entered the celestial world but through Christ.

Brother: Christ is in truth the "*Door*" to all enjoyment. Nothing is of any real or permanent service to thee but as thou approachest it through Christ; and whatever thou reachest through Him, however apparently insignificant and worthless, will contribute to thy highest weal. Entering thus through Him, thou art safe and free, and hast pasture everywhere. "By Me if any man enter in"—into business, recreation, science, literature, or religion—"he shall be saved, and shall go in and out"—move freely through the universe—"and shall find pasture"—shall get good out of everything. Enter whatever thou dost enter—business, religion, or recreation—through Christ, and thou shalt be free, safe, and fed in everything.

"Is He a door?—I'll enter in,
Behold the pasture, large and green:
A paradise divinely fair,
None but the sheep have freedom there."—*Watts*.

No. XXXVII.

THE PHILANTHROPY OF CHRIST'S MISSION.

"I am come that they might have life."—x. 10.

These words suggest at the outset three ideas about Christ—

First: That He existed before His appearance in our world. "*I am come.*" Whence? *Plato* entertained the idea that all souls had an existence anterior to their connection with the body. This may be true or false. But Christ's pre-existence is distinctly taught—(John i. 10; iii. 13; xvii. 5; Eph. iii. 3; Phil. ii. 5—6; Col. i. 14—17).

Secondly: That His existence in our world is the result of His own voluntary determination. "*I am come.*" Not one of our race can be said to have "*come*" into the world. We have been sent. We had no voice or power in the question as to whether we should be, or not be, or as to whether we should be here or elsewhere—this or that. But Christ had this power.

Thirdly: That His determination to come into our world was swayed by love for man. "*I am come that they might have life.*" The subject which we shall now give attention is—the *Philanthropy of Christ's mission*; and in illustrating this we make three observations—

I.—THAT THE OBJECT OF HIS MISSION IS CONTRARY TO WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED.

Let us suppose that we are told, for the first time, two things. (1.) That there is in God's universe a province of moral beings who had renounced their allegiance to their Maker, and who for forty centuries had rebelled against His authority, spurned the overtures of His mercy, and persecuted the messengers of His love. (2.) That He resolves upon visiting that province in a special and extraordinary way—going down in person to it. Having been informed of these two things, suppose the question were propounded to us: What will be the object of His mission? We think that the answer would be prompt and decisive. We should say *punishment*: He would descend robed in terror with the sword of justice. Two things would urge us to the conclusion:—(a.) That justice must some day show herself in connection with sin. She will not sleep for ever. (b.) That mercy had been exercised sufficiently long towards that province. Four thousand years is a long period for mercy. All this applies exactly to our world; and yet Christ comes "*that we might have life.*"

II.—THAT THE OBJECT OF HIS MISSION WAS THE BESTOWMENT OF THE HIGHEST BLESSING ON HUMANITY.

"*That they might have life.*"

First: He gives corporeal life. Corporeal death comes by sin. I will grant three facts, and yet hold this Biblical doctrine intelli-

gently and tenaciously. (1.) That death was in the world before sin. (2.) That the human body, like all material organizations, tends to decomposition. (3.) That this globe is not adequate to the sustentation of a perpetual multiplication of the race. Albeit on one indisputable fact I base my faith: that the continuation of a creature's existence, for a day, a millennium, or for ever, depends entirely upon the purpose of the Creator. And His purpose is that we "*might have life.*" And this includes *corporeal* life. It is true that you do not see the accomplishment of this purpose yet. The graveyard is as still and quiet as ever. But the purpose of the faithful and Almighty mind is formed and virtually done. "One day with Him is as a thousand years." Christ has the key of every grave at His girdle. The trumpet will one day sound, and the graves will be opened; "the hour cometh, and now is, when all that are in their graves," &c. By resurrection is not necessarily meant the resurrection of the relics of the buried body.

Secondly: He gives spiritual life. Men are represented as spiritually dead. The valley of "dry bones" is not an inappropriate representation of the state of souls. Why is the depraved spirit represented as dead? Another question will answer this: What are the ideas you generally attach to death? (1.) Perhaps you say the extinction of some *principle*. You look at the corpse, and you feel that the mysterious something which coursed through those veins, moved those limbs, beamed through those glazed eyes, is gone out. It is so with the soul. Love to God, the principle of spiritual life, which once inspired and worked those faculties is gone out. (2.) Perhaps you say *separation*. You look at the corpse, and you feel the soul is gone from it,—the agent has left the instrument, and the instrument is therefore silent and motionless. The branch is cut from the root, and is withered; the star is turned from its centre, and is in darkness. So with the soul separated from God. (3.) Or perhaps you say *subjection*. You look at the corpse, and you see that which, when life was in it, subordinated the outward elements to its own health and vigour, now the sport of all. The sunbeam that cheered it, the air that heaved its lungs with life, all the gases that contributed to its energy, now contribute to its utter corruption. So it is with the soul. The outward circumstances in which it is placed, which were intended to brace and strengthen it, subordinate it to their capricious forces, and work out its ruin. (4.) Or perhaps you say *loathsomeness*. That dead body which a few days ago was so beautiful, is now offensive. Love itself says, "Give me ground to bury my dead out of my sight." So it is with the depraved soul. Its falsehood, vanity, selfishness, and carnality render it loathsome to all living souls. "Do not I hate them, O God, that hate Thee?" When you say, therefore, that the soul is dead, it is no figure.

Corporeal death is in truth but a faint symbol and figure of this. Now Christ is come, that we might have spiritual life. He is come to resuscitate the extinct principle, to unite it to its true Source of life—God; to invest it with a power to subordinate all outward circumstances to its use; and to adorn it with the beauties of holiness.

Let us look for a moment at this blessing, in order to value the gift of Christ.

(a) Life is the divinest thing. Wherever there is life, there is God in an especial sense. No one can give life but Him. Art has reached wonderful perfection; it can mimic life in the marble and on the canvas. The picture of Cowper's mother seems to have been a very perfect one: on the reception of it the filial poet exclaimed—

“Those lips are thine; thine own sweet smile I see.”

But as he looked at it in all the hue and form and expression of life, with her sweet eye fastening as it were upon her son, he felt that it was only a picture. No warm blood coursed through those veins, there was no motion in those limbs, no vision in those eyes; and with sadness he exclaims again—

“O that those lips had language!”

Life is the emanation of God—no creature can give it. Life is the Divinest thing on this earth. Spiritual life is Divine.

(b) Life is the dearest thing. Every living creature struggles to preserve it. Sometimes I fancy that even the grass beneath my tread shrinks at the injury I inflict. It is so with spiritual life; where it is there is a constant struggle to preserve it.

(c) Life is the mightiest thing. The storm is mighty; but life is mightier: the trees of the forest get strength from its fury. Gravitation is mighty; but life is mightier. The power that chains the ocean to its bed, and binds planets to their centre, is conquered by the little lark that pours down her music from the clouds. Take her life from her, and gravitation will bring her down.

Because life is thus the Divinest, the dearest, and the mightiest thing in the world, the great blessing which Christ imparts is called Life. Notice—

III.—THAT THE OBJECT OF HIS MISSION IS TO BESTOW THE HIGHEST BLESSING ON HUMANITY IN AN ABUNDANT DEGREE.

“*That they might have it more abundantly.*” The idea I take to be this, that Christ will not only restore lost life to man, but restore it in a greatly advanced measure—that He will give back to man more than sin took away. “Where sin abounded, grace will much more abound.”

Let us, to illustrate this, draw a comparison between spiritual

life in its original form in Adam, and spiritual life in its Christian form in the restored.

First: It is more abundant in the guarantees of its continuance in the Christian form. In Eden what a feeble thing it was—what a slight circumstance destroyed it! We, if Christians, resist temptations every day, a thousand times as strong as those which Adam yielded to. Take Adam and Paul. A little prohibited fruit is presented to Adam,—he yields. The greatest persecutions, obloquy, insults and perils, are presented to Paul to turn him away; and he says, “None of these things move me,” &c. “I give unto My sheep,” says Christ, “eternal life: neither shall any pluck them out of My hands.”

Secondly: It is more abundant in the amount of benevolent inspiration in the Christian form. The circumstance that Adam, to excuse his own guilty act, referred the blame to the partner of his life, shows that his soul could never have been the seat of very broad generous sympathies. It is contrary to the laws of mind to suppose that the soul passes at a bound from broad benevolent sympathies to the meanest selfishness. Compare with this the benevolent sympathies which Christianity gives. On one occasion Peter came to Christ (Matt. xviii. 21) and said, “Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times.” The Apostle, no doubt, thought this marvellously generous, but Christ said, “Seventy times seven,” *i. e.* there is to be no limit. Take Stephen when dying, &c.

Thirdly: It is more abundant in the honours it secures in the Christian form. I know not what honours man might have inherited if he had retained his innocence; no doubt he would have moved on for ever in a progressive course of dignity and blessedness; but he never would, I think, have seen his own nature in personal connection with God. This we see. Who is in the midst of the throne now?—*A Man*. Who will judge the world at last?—*A Man*.

Fourthly: It is more abundant in the influence which it exerts in the Christian form. Spirit life in Adam would not have been powerful enough to convert sinners. It had neither the argument nor the impulse; but in Christianity it has. “It casts down every imagination; every thing that exalts itself.”

Brothers, under what obligation are we to Christ! He is our Life! What a test you have by which to determine whether the object of His mission has been realized in your case! Have you this Life? How clearly does it point out what should be the grand aim of our existence! It is to give Life.

No. LXXI.

THE TRANSCENDENT ELEMENT IN MORAL CHARACTER.

“Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father.”—x. 17, 18.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 17.—“Therefore doth My (R. V. THE) Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might (R. V. MAY) take it again.” What cause? Christ’s self-sacrificing love for His sheep. “I lay down My life”—devote it to the good of mankind. In order that I might take it again. This has been suggested to mean—“This evidence will there be of My Father’s love to Me, that, having laid down My life, I shall receive it again.”

Ver. 18.—“No man (R. V. ONE) taketh it from (R. V. AWAY FROM) Me,

but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” Here He announces absolute power over His own existence, and His voluntary sacrifice of that existence. He did not die by necessity. He died because He willed it; He rose because He willed it. “This commandment have I received (R. V. RECEIVED I) of My Father.” His self-sacrifice and His resurrection from the dead were by the will of His Father. “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,” &c.

HOMILETICS.

Our subject is *the transcendent element in moral character*.

In these words we find Christ declaring four of the most significant and important facts that can possibly engage our attention.

I.—THAT HE HAD AN ABSOLUTE POWER OVER HIS OWN EXISTENCE.

“I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” Of all the millions of men that ever appeared on this earth, Jesus of Nazareth was the only Man that could justly claim His own existence. He was His *own Proprietor*. All other men are bound to say, We “are not our own.” Not a particle of the body, not a faculty of the mind can we claim as our own: all belongs to another; all souls are His. But whilst men are the mere trustees of their existence, Christ was the Owner of His. Being thus His own, He had a right to do with Himself whatever accorded with His desires. He could lay down this possession and take it up whenever, however, and wherever He pleased. Wonderful property! Life! a far greater thing than to own a world.

He declares—

II.—THAT THE LAYING DOWN OF HIS OWN EXISTENCE WAS ENTIRELY HIS OWN VOLUNTARY ACT.

“No man taketh it from Me.” His whole biography shows, and the mighty miracles that He performed, that no human power could take His life from Him if He had willed otherwise. He did not die because of disease or age or human violence, but because He

willed to die. Indeed, in laying down His life, there was something more than *willingness* on His part. We have read of good men—aye, we have known them—who have been willing to die. They have said with Paul, “I desire to depart.” But all these men knew right well that death in their case was *unavoidable*, that they could not live here for ever. All that their willingness meant, therefore, was, that they would as soon die then and there, as somewhere else and at some other time. It was not so with Christ. There was no necessity for His dying. He might have lived here or anywhere else for ever. He died simply because He willed it; He willed His life away. “Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit.” It is this voluntariness that gives infinite moral might and merit to His death. It invests His cross with a force sublimely unique and ever growing—a force that has already wrought mighty revolutions in the world, and that will one day work out the spiritual reformation of humanity.

He declares—

III.—THAT ON ACCOUNT OF THIS VOLUNTARY SELF-SACRIFICE HIS FATHER LOVED HIM.

“*Therefore doth My Father love Me,*” &c. The relation of the Father to the Son is an impenetrable mystery. We can only think of them as distinct from each other, and one holding a position in some way subordinate to the other. The Father *loves*. He is not sheer intellect or heartless force, but has *sensibility*, and His sensibility is instinct with love. He *is* love. He loves His Son. His great heart seems to centre in Him. Why does He love Him? Because there is something morally lovable in Him. What is that? Here we are told what that is—*His self-sacrificing spirit*. This spirit is the very essence of all virtue, and the fountain of all goodness and beneficence. It is the very inspiration of God Himself, as is demonstrated in the works of nature. No moral intelligence in the universe who has it not can be by Him loved with esteem. Christ had it in an immeasurable degree. Hence His unbounded love for Him. “*Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again.*” Would we secure the love of the Infinite? Let us free ourselves from all selfishness, and come under the dominion of that “charity which seeketh not her own.”

He declares—

IV.—THAT HIS SELF-SACRIFICING SPIRIT WAS ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF THE ETERNAL.

“*This commandment have I received of My Father.*” It was God’s will that Christ should be so actuated by this spirit as to give His life for the moral redemption of mankind. And the “*commandment*” that Christ received of the Father is binding on every

living man. Conscience and the Bible tell us this. Every man should be "conformed to His death," should have that same spirit that led Him to the cross. Unless we have in us His self-sacrificing spirit, His sacrifice on the cross will be no service to us. "Bear each other's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His." "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but Him which died for them, and rose again." "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Such passages as these assure us that "*this commandment*" we too have received of the Father, and should act in all things with self-sacrificing love.

CONCLUSION. Where are the Churches, where are the ministers, who are ruled by "*this commandment*"? When this "*commandment*" governs the Churches, the world will be converted—not before.

NO LXXII.

A BAD SPIRIT AND A SOUND ARGUMENT.

"There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye Him? Others said, These are not the words of Him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?"—x. 19—21.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 19.—"*There was* (R. V. AROSE) *a division therefore again among the Jews.*" Christ having finished the discourse in which He was interrupted by the Pharisees (in chap. ix. ver. 40), that discourse including reproofs, monitions, and sublime truths in relation to His death, the crowd seemed to continue about Him all the while, and often interrupted Him, as in chap. ix. 17—43. Their opinions concerning Himself and what He said were by no means in accord. And here at the close there is a division—literally, a *schism*.

Ver. 20.—"*And many of them said,*

He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye Him?" He hath a devil, a demon. This they seem to have said, not to Him, but about Him behind His back; and they resolved to treat Him henceforth as a madman: treat His utterances as beneath their notice.

Ver. 24.—"*Others said, These are not the words* (R. V. SAYINGS) *of Him that hath* (R. V. ONE POSSESSED WITH) *a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?*" These belonged to the party who regarded Him as possessed with an evil spirit, a madman, and they adduced an argument, and the argument was sound until a demon opened the eyes of the blind.

HOMILETICS.

In these verses we have two things worth note—a *bad spirit* and a *sound argument*.

I.—A BAD SPIRIT.

First: Here is a schismatic spirit. "*There was a division.*" Sad, that Christ and His doctrines should divide men into sects.

One might have thought that, as His life was so manifestly, so pre-eminently pure, loving, and morally commanding, and His doctrine so congruous with human reason and conscious spiritual wants, that all men would have centred in Him. Schism amongst men in relation to Christ is bad. The sects are a calumny on the Gospel, and a curse to the race.

Secondly : Here is a blasphemous spirit. "*And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad.*" Here is the old accusation, "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub." There are, to use the language we have elsewhere employed, two great evils which men commit on the question of moral causation—

(1.) *Some ascribe bad deeds to God.* The warrior who has rifled cities and slain his thousands, appears after his bloody achievements at the altar, to return thanks to that God Who has commanded us not to *kill*, and declared that all wars arise from "*the lusts*" of the wicked heart. The priest who presumes to stand between God and the people, by his sacerdotal services professing to propitiate Almighty Justice, ascribes his crafty deeds to God. The Islam and the Mormonite leaders, who impose upon the credulity of the ignorant, profess to have derived their authority and doctrines from Heaven. How much kingly despotism, military slaughter, priestly craft, religious imposture, and international plunder and oppression are enacted in the sacred name of God !

(2.) *Some ascribe good deeds to Satan.* These cavilling and malicious men did so. Irritated with jealousy at the impression which Christ's miracles made upon the people, so favourable to His own growing popularity, they said, with contemptuous indignation, "This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils." They could not deny the miracle, it was too patent to all ; the only plan they had, therefore, to resist its influence amongst the people, was to ascribe it to Satanic agency. This they did. They traced a good act to a bad cause, a Divine act to the arch foe of God. This was heinous sin. Yet the principle of this has been too common in every age. What is the conduct of those who assign all the good effects which Christianity has produced upon the world, the moral miracles it has achieved amongst the various tribes and nations of the earth, to the ingenuity and craft of impostors, and who designate the Bible a "cunningly devised fable?" What, too, is the conduct of those who, alas ! abound in all times and lands, who are ever disposed to ascribe good acts to bad motives, and brand as hypocrites the most holy and useful men ? Why, such conduct is exactly the same in principle as that which these blaspheming scribes and Pharisees now committed.

Thirdly : Here is an intolerant spirit. "*Why hear ye Him ?*" The spirit which has characterized bigots and bloody persecutors through all Church history breathes in these words, and this spirit

is, alas! not extinct. "*Why hear ye Him?*" So one sect now says, in relation to a preacher of another sect.

In these verses we have,—

II.—A SOUND ARGUMENT.

"*Others said, These are not the words of Him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?*" There is no reason to believe that the devil could give eyes to the blind; and if he could, there is every reason to believe that he would not. The principle on which these men reasoned, was that which Christ Himself enunciated, "*Ye shall know them by their fruits.*" This is an infallible test. As in the material so in the moral, men reap what they sow. Every tree beareth its own kind; a corrupt heart will have a corrupt life. The argument of these men may be thrown into a syllogistic form. An essentially malevolent being does not perform genuinely merciful deeds; the desire is essentially malevolent, and therefore this merciful deed, namely, the giving eyes to a blind man, cannot be his act. Evil deeds come from evil beings. Christianity will bear this test. Judge Christianity by its works. This is the test with which Christ sought to overcome the rising scepticism of John the Baptist. Christ says, "*Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind,*" &c. &c.

No LXXIII.

RELIGIOUS SCEPTICISM.

(*Jesus in Jerusalem at the Feast of Dedication. He retires beyond Jordan.*)

JOHN x. 22—42.

"And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter," &c.

x. 22—30.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 22.—"*And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter.*" The feast of dedication succeeded the feast of tabernacles after an interval of two months. It was established under Judas Maccabæus, after it had been desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes, about 167 years before Christ. That monarch had trampled upon the Jewish religion, burned the books of law, established idolatry in the holy place, and offered swine's flesh upon the great altar. Judas, the triumphant hero of the Jews, having conquered him in battle, re-dedicated the temple at a period answering to our 15th of December. Hence "*it was winter.*"

Ver. 23.—"*And Jesus walked* (R. v.

WAS WALKING) *in the temple in Solomon's porch.*" A porch, this, outside of the temple proper, where persons could walk without exposure, and where they could be sheltered both from storms and scorching sunbeams. Here Jesus was now walking alone, not only to be sheltered from wintry blasts or showers, but no doubt to indulge in calm and devout meditation. Some of the pagan temples of Greece had porticoes for the convenience of those who attended them. Here, independent of the weather, they could stand or walk, indulge in lonely reverie, or engage in social converse. "It is curious to remark," says a modern expositor, "that from two of the words used in this verse,

περιπάτει and στοά, two philosophical sects were named respectively Peripatetics and Stoics."

Ver. 24.—"*Then came the Jews*" (R. V. THE JEWS THEREFORE) (that is, we presume, the rulers of the Jews, chap. i. 19) "*round about Him, and said unto Him, How long dost Thou make us to doubt?*" (R. V. HOLD US IN SUSPENSE.) I cannot agree with Lange in regarding these Jews as sincere now in their inquiry. They did not seek for truth, but they sought to entrap Him. Their religious malice thirsted for some utterance from Him that contained blasphemy, and would consequently justify them according to their law in stoning Him to death. "*If Thou be* (R. V. ART) *the Christ, tell us plainly.*" How often had He told them plainly?

Ver. 25.—"*Jesus answered them, I told you*" (in substance He had so told them, chap. vii. 37, 38; viii. 35, 36—58), "*and ye believed* (R. V. BELIEVE) *not: the works that I do in My Father's name, they* (R. V. THESE) *bear witness of Me.*" My works are the credentials of My Messiahship.

Ver. 26.—"*But ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you.*" (R. V. OMTS THE LAST CLAUSE.) The "*ye*" is emphatic, and stands in contrast to the sheep.

Ver. 27.—"*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.*" The meaning of this expression has been explained in the sketch on verses 1—16.

Ver. 28.—"*And I give unto them eternal life.*" I give, not I will give, but I impart the blessing to them now. The word "*life*" here must be taken in an ethical rather than a physical sense. Eternal existence is no blessing in itself, it may be a curse. Moral goodness is life, and moral goodness is eternal. "The soul's endless being," says Dr. Young, "is in intelligence, rectitude, purity, love, and all goodness."* "*They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck* (R. V. NO ONE SHALL SNATCH) *them out of My hand.*" The soul with eternal goodness in it can

"never perish," nor can it ever be taken out of the "*hand*," of Christ. It is possible for Him and His Father to give it up, and then it would "*perish*;" but will They? Never. It is the Divine Will, and that Will is immutable and omnipotent, that not one of the "*least*" of His little ones shall perish.

Ver. 29.—"*My Father, which gave* (R. V. HATH GIVEN) *them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck* (R. V. NO ONE IS ABLE TO SNATCH) *them out of My* (R. V. THE) *Father's hand.*" My Father, Who has given them to Me. If He has given them—(1.) He is their absolute Proprietor. This is undeniable; all souls are His. If He has given them,—(2.) It must be in harmony with their own free consent. Souls cannot be given away as material objects can. They are essentially free, and the great Father would not outrage the nature of His offspring. If He has given them—(3.) It is not in such a way as to involve the renunciation of His claim upon them. When we give a thing away, we cease to have any right to it. God will never relinquish His claim to the existence, love, reverence, and service of souls. Indeed, Christ in this very passage, after speaking of them as being given to Him, says they are in His Father's hand.

Ver. 30.—"*I and My* (R. V. THE) *Father are one.*" One in moral consciousness, one in spirit, one in will. In the original it seems to mean, not one person, but one thing. The expression is analogous to that in 1 Cor. iii. 8, "He that planteth and he that watereth are one." That is, oneness of design and purpose. Calvin says concerning this passage: "That the ancients wrested it to prove that Christ was the same in Being with the Father; but Christ is not discussing concerning His unity of substance, but His unity of will with the Father, to wit, that whatever was done by Him would be confirmed with power by the Father." Though other passages, I think, abundantly prove that Christ is God, this does not.

* See "The Christ of History," by Dr. Young, p. 109.

HOMILETICS.

The conduct of the Jews, as recorded in these verses, suggests a few general truths in relation to *religious scepticism*.

I.—IT DOES NOT LACK EVIDENCE.

“And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon’s porch. Then came the Jews round about Him, and said unto Him, How long dost Thou make us to doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly? Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me.”* Christ appeals to His works in proof of His Divine authority and oneness with the Father. His works were such as no mere man had ever performed or could ever accomplish. They were not only the productions of Divine power, but expressions of Divine benevolence. “What,” to use the language of another, “is the extent of the evidence arising out of Christ’s works? The circle of Christ’s power over nature seems a free circle. Was the eye blind? He opened it. The ear deaf? He unstopped it. The tongue bound? He loosed it. The brain lunatic? He regulated it. Food scarce? He multiplied it. Wine wanting? At His touch the water blushed into it. The storm up? He laid it. Kindred dead? He raised them. Mortals suffering the ills ‘flesh is heir to’? Among the sick hosts on hosts that crowded His steps, probably every variety of disease fled from His healing hand. And in the parting of body and soul on His cross, as its miraculous might went out of the world, it rent it and veiled its light. What was wanting to describe this power as it were round the whole sphere of nature, but that the very hands and lips that had held it, after death’s damp had passed through them, should break through bars of rocks to do and speak again in the world of their benediction? When throughout the power of the world yields to a mightier power, the thin crust is broken that parts us from the Infinite and Eternal. We know God’s presence; we see the vision of the wheels Ezekiel saw, which had a living spirit in them moving them every way. We judge that God moves what at every point He stops—that He is in the tempest He makes sink at His Son’s bidding—that He lights up the luminary He darkens before His Son’s cross.”

If the works that Christ had accomplished in His day were sufficient evidence, how much more the *moral* works which He has accomplished since in Christendom? For eighteen centuries those works have been multiplying. To sceptics who say, How long are we to be held in doubt? we answer, If you are sincere in your inquiries, you need not be held in suspense a day longer.

It is suggested in relation to religious scepticism that—

* See Germ, p. 300.

II.—IT LACKS SYMPATHY WITH TRUTH.

“*Ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.*” * This lack of sympathy with truth—and not the lack of evidence—is the cause of scepticism. The sympathy of these Jews was with the formulæ and conventionalities of religion, and not with truth itself. The wish is “evermore the father of the thought.” The facts that are uncongenial to the temper of the heart, the intellect is always disposed to question and deny. Men are sceptics because they have not sympathy with the truth. Why are men atheists? Because they do not “like to retain” God in all their thoughts. Why are men anti-Christians? Because they do not like Christ: He is too pure, too honest. “Ye will not come unto Me, that ye might have life.” Are men responsible for this lack of sympathy with Christ? As well ask, Are men responsible for not being truthful, just, and virtuous? Their own consciences are bound to answer in the affirmative.

It is suggested in relation to religious scepticism that—

III.—IT EXPOSES TO ENORMOUS LOSS.

“*I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.*” This implies—

First: That they, the sceptics, would *not* have eternal life. That they would not have everlasting goodness, freedom, perfection, and joy. That they would not have that, the absence of which meant to “*perish*.” It is implied—

Secondly: That they, the sceptics, would *not* have eternal security. His sheep, the true genuine believers, would be safe in the hands of Christ and His Father. Safe from ruin and misery. But those who were not His sheep would be insecure and in a perilous condition.

CONCLUSION. See here—(1.) How *hypocritical* is scepticism! These Jews professed to be in search of truth, when, in fact, they were only in quest of some pretext upon which they could destroy truth. They wanted to entrap Christ. Observe—(2.) How *irrational* is scepticism! It refuses to accept the most overwhelming evidence in favour of truth: the mighty and ever-multiplying works of Christ. Observe—(3.) How *immoral* is scepticism! It springs from the state of the heart, destitution of sympathy with Christ. Observe—(4.) How *cyregiously foolish* is scepticism! It risks eternal life and eternal security.

* See Germ, p. 300.

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. XXXVIII.

WINTER AS AN EMBLEM OF DEATH.

"And it was winter."—x. 22.

Winter is an emblem of death. Observe—

I.—WINTER IS DREARY OF ASPECT.

So is death. The leaden cloud, the ungenial air, the leafless branches, the shivering creatures of earth and air, invest winter with a sombre and saddening aspect. How dreary is death! The body—once rosy, warm, agile, sensitive in feeling, eyes beaming with intelligence, nerves quivering with emotion—pallid, cold, rigid, motionless, insensible as marble. Nothing on this earth so dreary as a human body stretched out in its coffin, and prepared for the grave.

II.—WINTER IS DEVELOPMENT OF LIFE.

So is death. Winter is not death; it is only nature stripping itself of its old costume to prepare another. It is life going to rest for a short space, in order to spring into new vigour and beauty. There is no extinction. So is it with death. It is but a pause in life's march, a halt on the road to eternity, a sleep; or rather, it is a birth into a new world. It is—

"A moulding
Of forms, and a wondrous birth,
And a growing and fair unfolding
Of life from life, and life from death.
For death, a mother benign,
Transformeth, but destroyeth not,
And the new thing fair of the old is wrought."

III.—WINTER IS A LAW OF NECESSITY.

So is death. Without winter there would be no spring, and no summer, and no golden autumn. Winter is a necessity of nature. Death is necessary. From death the higher life comes. It is so *mentally*. How much in a man's mind must die—conceit, prejudice, etc.—before it can advance! It is so *morally*. There must be a crucifixion of passions and lusts before there can be a resurrection. It is so with the body: "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

No. XXXIX.

MORAL IMITATION.

"Follow Me."—x. 27.

The following remarks will show the importance of following Christ:—

I.—THAT MAN'S MORAL CHARACTER DETERMINES HIS DESTINY.

"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." So is he in his *experience*, whether happy or miserable; in his *prospects*, whether terrific or inviting; in his *influence*, whether useful or pernicious; in his *relation to God*, whether approved or condemned; to the *world*, whether a blessing or a curse. Out of character springs destiny; blooms the Paradise, or flames the Gehenna. It must be ever so. As is the moral state of the soul, so is God, and the universe to it.

II.—THAT MAN'S MORAL CHARACTER IS FORMED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF IMITATION.

So strong is the imitative instinct in children that they draw, as it were, the ruling spirit of those around them into themselves, and it shows itself in their tones, their prattle, and their gait. The seed of a child's action is not in the principles his parents inculcate, but in the acts he performs. "An example," says *Walpole*, "is like the press; the thing done is the thought printed: it may be repeated, it cannot be recalled. It has gone forth with a self-propagating power, and may run to the end of the earth, and descend from 'generation to generation.' The ancient Romans recognized this force of the principle of imitation in their youth, and hence placed in the vestibules of their houses the busts of their great men, that the young men might be reminded of their noble deeds and illustrious virtues. Parents mould the character of their children, and hence families have a likeness that is moral as well as physical."

III.—THAT THE FORMATION OF A GOOD CHARACTER REQUIRES A PERFECT MODEL.

It is said that Sir Joshua Reynolds found, after years of studying his art, that he had been imitating, not Titian, whom he had desired to make his model; but the productions of one who had forged his style. On this he resolved to make nature his model, and thus he became himself a great master of the art. Man morally must have a model, and according to his model so will he be. One reason, perhaps the chief, why the moral character of men the world over, has been and still is, so depraved and undivine, is because the world for four thousand years never had a perfect model, and that now the only perfect model is but little known and less appreciated.

IV.—THAT THE ONLY PERFECT MODEL IS JESUS CHRIST.

Some have said that He is too sublime a character, too "separate from sinners" to be imitated by man. But this is a mistake: no character is so imitable as the character of Jesus of Nazareth. Who is the most imitable character? I answer—

First: He who has the strongest power to command my admiration. We always imitate men in proportion to our admiration for them.

Secondly: He who is the most transparent in character. We can never become thoroughly like one whose character is shadowy and vague, whose leading principles and aims are not salient.

Thirdly: He who is most unchangeable in the spirit that animates him. We can never become thoroughly like a man who is constantly changing, for if we resemble him to-day we shall be unlike him to-morrow.

I maintain that we cannot completely become like any one in character, who has not the power of commanding our highest admiration, who is not transparent in spirit, and unchangeable in purpose. Christ *alone* is all this. Hence He is infinitely the most imitable Model.

CONCLUSION. "*Follow Me.*" This is an epitome of all the moral laws of God concerning men. Herein, too, is man's life and perfection. Imitate Him, not by trying to do what He did, or talk as He talked, but by inbreathing that moral spirit of His which has given Him a "name above every name."

NO. LXXIV.

RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE.

"Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from My Father; for which of those works do ye stone Me?" &c.—x. 31—38.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 31.—"*Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.*" They had sought to destroy Him before (v. 18; viii. 59).

Ver. 32.—"*Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from My (R. V. THE) Father; for which of those works do ye stone Me?*" or, as some render it, "are ye stoning Me?" They had, in all probability, brought stones with them for the purpose; and although, perhaps, they had not actually cast the stones at Him, they were about doing so.

Ver. 33.—"*The Jews answered Him, saying, For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God.*" It is evident from this that they understood Christ to represent Himself as God. "*Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God.*" "The Jews," says an ancient writer, "understood

Him better than the Arians." "*But for blasphemy.*" Stoning was the legal punishment for this crime (Lev. xxiv. 16). To represent Thyself as God is blasphemy: this Thou hast done, and for this we are about to stone Thee.

Ver. 34.—"*Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?*" Christ here quotes Psalm lxxxii. 6. The Jews included the Psalms in what they termed their law. Christ passes no opinion for or against their law, but He quotes the passage because it was with them an authority.

Vers. 35, 36.—"*If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of Him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?*" You cannot deny your own Scriptures; you are

bound to recognize them. The quotation from Psalms reads as follows: "I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High. But ye shall die like men." The words were addressed to the judicial magistrate. "Christ here," says a modern expositor, "draws the irresistible conclusion, that if the rulers of Israel were called gods, because they were the commissioned heralds of the word of God, then how much more properly was He, Whom the Father had specially sanctified, and set apart, and sent into the world as the Founder of a new religion, to be called the Son of God?" The argument seems to be this: If your law—that which you hold in authority—call those gods who are prophets, or magistrates, or both, do I blaspheme in representing Myself as being one with the Father, Who has consecrated Me to the office of Prophet, and authorized Me to assume this character?

Vers. 37, 38.—"*If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do (R. V. THEM), though ye believe not Me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe (R. V. UNDERSTAND), that the Father is in Me, and I in Him*" (R. V. THE FATHER). There was in Christ's works, independently of any miracles, a self-evidencing truth, majesty, and grace, which those who had any spiritual susceptibility were unable to resist (chap. vii. 46; viii. 30). But for those who wanted this, the "works" were a mighty help. When these failed, the case was desperate indeed. "*That ye may know and believe, that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.*" "He is reiterating His claim to essential oneness with the Father, which He had only seemed to soften down that He might calm their rage and get their ear again for a moment."—*Dr. Brown.*

HOMILETICS.

The subject presented in these verses is *Religious Intolerance*; and three remarks are suggested concerning it.

I.—IT PERSECUTES A MAN SIMPLY ON ACCOUNT OF HIS RELIGIOUS OPINIONS.

"*Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.*" Why did they do this? Merely because He had proclaimed a doctrine concerning Himself which agreed not with their opinions; nay, which was repugnant to their prejudices, interests, and pride. He said He was the "*Son of God.*" They would not believe this, and called it "*blasphemy.*" In every age of the world this religious intolerance has been rampant; and although it has not at its command the instrumentality with which to inflict suffering, as it once had, its spirit is as rife now as ever, and it employs means more impalpable and subtle, but not the less powerful, to wound the supposed heretic.

To persecute a man on account of his opinions is—

First: Most absurd. Such are the constitutional differences between minds in the kind and measure of their capacity, and such is the difference in the educational process through which all minds pass, that it is absolutely impossible for any two minds to have exactly the same view of the same subject. There must be, therefore, a diversity of opinion. This diversity is interesting and useful, it stimulates discussion and promotes thought. Were

all to think alike, how monotonous would be the social life of the universe !

To persecute a man on account of his opinions is—

Secondly : Most arrogant. Greater audacity know I not than that which is displayed in the man, or the Church, who attempts to bring all men's opinions to his own theological standard. Who was Calvin ? who was Luther ? who was John Knox ? who was Wesley ? that men should be bound to accept their opinions ? “ Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye ? ” Let every man be “ fully persuaded in his own mind.”

Another remark suggested here concerning religious intolerance is—

II.—IT PERSECUTES A MAN ON ACCOUNT OF HIS OPINIONS,
HOWEVER EXCELLENT HIS LIFE MAY BE.

“ *Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from My Father ; for which of those works do ye stone Me ?* ” Numerous were the works that Christ had wrought amongst them. So numerous, that the Evangelist says, that “ if they had been written in a book, the world itself would not contain the books.” All these works were *good works*—works to bless men, both in body and in soul. “ He went about doing good.” These persecutors did not deny this ; nay, they tacitly admitted it. In truth, deny it they could not, for His “ *good works* ” were patent to all. And yet, though they knew He was the greatest Benefactor amongst them, and His character was one of exemplary excellence, simply because His doctrine clashed with their opinions, they stoned Him. Good men here in England are stoned now on account of their opinions—stoned, not with flint or granite, but with the tongue of slander and subtle social influences that damage reputation and depreciate influence. Bigots in all sects throw their stones at men, not because they are not good, but because they are not Baptists, not Independents, not Wesleyans, or not Episcopalians. “ *For a good work we stone Thee not,*”—we stone Thee because Thou art not one of us. Read the so-called religious journals, and you will find that this *stoning* is rampant even here in England, and now.

The other remark suggested concerning religious intolerance is—

III.—IT PERSECUTES A MAN ON ACCOUNT OF HIS OPINIONS,
HOWEVER STRONG THE ARGUMENTS IN THEIR FAVOUR.

Christ reasons with these bigots. “ *Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods ? If He called them gods, unto whom the Word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken ; say ye of Him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest ; because I said, I am the Son of God ?* ” Christ seems to say, that even on the assumption that He was nothing more than a man, there was no “ *blasphemy* ” in His calling

Himself a "god," according to their own authority. Their law called men who were magistrates, "gods." And if they allowed that, what *blasphemy* was there in Him, Who was "*sanctified by the Father*," "*one with the Father*," and Who, as they were bound to acknowledge, performed works which those whom their law called "gods" never had accomplished, and never could? If your Scriptures call men gods, "*unto whom the word of the Lord came*," surely there can be no blasphemy in Me representing Myself as God, Who am the Word of God itself—the *Logos*. *Lange* thus states the argument: "*A minori ad majus*. In what respect? (1.) From those blameworthy judges and their lofty title to Christ; (2.) From those who derived their dignity from the Mosaic institution, to Him Whom God hath sanctified; (3.) From those to whom the λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ did but come, to Him Whom God sanctified and sent into the world, *i. e.* Whom he has actually made His λόγος to the world; the Logos-nature of Christ is here implied, though not expressed. This last we hold to be the only correct conception, the only one satisfactory to the Old Testament Christology." But His argument went for nothing although it was very clear and very conclusive, quite sufficient to show that He was no blasphemer.

CONCLUSION. What an accursed thing—this religious intolerance is! Absurd, arrogant, cruel, regardless of moral excellence, dead to argument, alive only to what it deems heresy.

No. LXXV.

MORAL INCORRIGIBILITY AND POSTHUMOUS USEFULNESS.

"Therefore they sought again to take Him: but He escaped out of their hand," &c.—x. 39—42.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 39.—"*Therefore they sought again to take Him: but He escaped* (R. V. AND HE WENT FORTH) *out of their hand*." He did not retract His statement, or seek to conciliate them. He stood His ground. And as He saw they were determined to lay violent hands upon Him, He escaped (ἐξῆλθεν), "went or passed away out of their grasp, just when they thought themselves sure of having Him."

Ver. 40.—"*And went* (R. V. HE WENT) *away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized* (R. V. WAS AT THE FIRST BAPTIZING); *and there He abode*." "The place is Bethabara. 'First' was to distinguish it from the second place of

baptism, in chap. iii. 23. Why Jesus went away from Jerusalem is plainly enough intimated in what precedes. He must die in Jerusalem, and not elsewhere; but not before the passover. As "His hour was not yet come," He retired for a season from the now mad rage of His enemies. But why did He go to Bethabara in particular? What follows gives the reason. John had there uttered his first testimony concerning Jesus. The circumstance of our Lord's going there must have brought the fact visibly to the people's remembrance."—*Hengstenberg*.

Ver. 41.—"*And many resorted* (R. V. CAME) *unto Him, and said, John did no miracle* (R. V. INDEED DID NO SIGN): *but all things that* (R. V. WHATSOEVER)

John spake of this Man were true." Many resorted unto Him. "Bengel: *Fructus posthumus officii Johannis.* But we must not overlook the fact that Christ had before sojourned in Perea and worked there. John did no miracle; nevertheless he is attested by Christ Himself in what he said of Him. And thus his testimony to

Christ lives again and continues working to the furtherance of faith,"—Lange.

Ver. 42.—"*And many believed on Him there.*" He found in that region an audience made susceptible by the teaching and influence of John the Baptist.

HOMILETICS.

Two subjects of thought are here presented to us—*moral incorrigibility* and *posthumous usefulness*.

I.—MORAL INCORRIGIBILITY.

What was the result of the appeal of Christ to the good works He had performed amongst them, and His appeal to their "*Law*"? What was the effect of His noble life and strong logic? Were their prejudices broken down? was their opposition overcome? No; here it is: "*Therefore they sought again to take Him: but He escaped out of their hand.*" Their opposition was rather intensified, and their determination to stone Him to death grew stronger. The mightiest ministry of the Son of God was lost upon these men. There are undoubtedly men on this earth who have reached the stage of moral incorrigibility. Their opinions are fossilized, their habits are confirmed, their characters are stereotyped. Did not Christ teach this when He said, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you?" And again, when weeping over Jerusalem, He spoke of the "things that belonged to peace" as hid from the eyes of the doomed city. Indeed, examples of such characters lie thickly around us all. There are men so canine in temper, so swinish in materialism, that to argue with them on spiritual subjects would be waste labour, and expose to insult and persecution. With these characters the day of grace is over, retribution has already got them in its iron grasp. Two evils befell these men now to which all such characters are liable—

First: Disappointment. "*They sought again to take Him: but He escaped out of their hand.*" They made all arrangements to stone Him; and when their plans were complete, they looked for Him; but He was not, He had gone. The incorrigible sinner is irrevocably doomed to disappointment. Sooner or later he will discover that all his calculations are false. He will have all his plans thwarted, his purposes broken, and his hopes blasted. Another evil which befell these men was—

Secondly: The loss of Christ. Christ had withdrawn from their midst. He was not afraid of them, but His time had not yet

come. When the hour struck He would voluntarily again fall into their hands. Meanwhile they lost Him. The greatest calamity that can happen to a man or a community is the withdrawal of Christ; and this must happen sooner or later to the incorrigible. "My spirit shall not always strive with man." When He withdraws from the human soul, it is as if the sun withdrew from its orbit, and all the planets rush into black, fathomless, thunderous chaos.

The other subject of thought here is—

II.—POSTHUMOUS USEFULNESS.

"Jesus went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there He abode. And many resorted unto Him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this Man were true. And many believed on Him there." This Bethabara was a town on the east bank of Jordan, where there was a ford across the river, whence the name—house-of-passage, or ferry-house. It was thirty miles north-east of Jerusalem. Here the Israelites crossed the Jordan, and here John baptized and fulfilled his mission.

Now the ministry of a man who had been perhaps some time in his grave had prepared the population of this neighbourhood to receive Christ.

First: The ministry of this dead man was *remembered*. The appearance of Christ in their midst and His deeds and doctrines brought John the Baptist and his ministry up to the memory of these people. He was alive again amongst them. His extraordinary *personnel* became vivid to their imaginations, and his rousing voice re-echoed its thunders in their hearts. The ministry of faithful ministers will never be forgotten by their hearers. Preachers must live in the memory of their hearers.

Secondly: The ministry of this dead man was *useful*. (1.) It served to set off to the minds of the people the superiority of Christ's ministry. "*John did no miracle.*" His ministry was purely moral. The effects he produced were directly on mind, and by the tremendous force of his oratory. But Christ, it would seem, performed miracles among them, as well as preached doctrines, and they were struck with His superiority. John was great, they felt, but Christ was greater. When John and Christ appeared in their presence, a few months before, John would strike them as the greater, for before their eyes John baptized Him in that Jordan. But now He was the greater. (2.) It served to confirm the Messiahship of Christ. "*All things that John spake of this Man were true.*" They remembered what John had said concerning His supernal character and mission; and now they felt that John's words were realized. The consequence was, that "*many believed*"

on Him there." And "there He abode." How long, we are not told. How delightful must have been the intercourse which His genuine disciples had with Him there! "They were choice Sabbath hours, where no police-officers watched them in the crowd. There, across the desert, some thirty miles from Jerusalem, they were free and secure.

CONCLUSION. Faithful ministers may take courage from the fact that, as in the case of John the Baptist, their ministry will be operating for good when they are in their graves. John was dead and buried; but his ministry was working in Bethabara, and working so as to prepare men to receive Christ and to believe on Him.

No. LXXVI.

THE FAMILY AT BETHANY.—(No. 1.)

(*The raising of Lazarus at Bethany.*—JOHN xi. 1–46.)

"Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha," &c.—xi. 1–6.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—In the last verses of the preceding chapter we find that, in order to elude the malignant purposes of the Pharisees in Jerusalem, Christ went away beyond Jordan, where John had baptized, a distance of between twenty-five and thirty miles from the city. Here He seems to have continued for some time; in fact, to have continued until a message reached Him of the sickness of His friend Lazarus. "The narrative of the raising of Lazarus," says *Westcott*, "is unique in its completeness. The essential circumstances of the fact in regard to persons, manners, results, are given with perfect distinctness. The history is more complete than in chapter nine, because the persons stand in closer connection with the Lord than the blind man; and the event itself had in many ways a ruling influence on the end of His ministry."

Ver. 1.—"Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town (R. V. THE VILLAGE) of Mary and her sister Martha." Bethany was a small village lying at the foot of Mount Olivet, and a road leads from it into the metropolis, crossing the brook Kedron by a rustic bridge, winding up amidst a host of vineyards. From the fact that it is called the "town of

Mary and her sister Martha," it has been inferred by some that not only their parents were dead, but that they were people of property, and that they were well-known in the neighbourhood. The probability that this is the case, that Mary, at a feast held in honour of Jesus, poured on the feet of Jesus a box of ointment valued by Judas at 300 pence—a sum amounting in our money to about £50—is of itself sufficient to show that they were at any rate in easy, if not affluent, circumstances; and the fact that a large number of Jews came to comfort the sisters after the death of their brother Lazarus, suggests that they had considerable social influence.

Ver. 2.—"(It (R. V. AND IT) was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)" This fact, which is given elsewhere (Matt. xxvi. 7; Mark xiv. 3; chap. xii. 3), seems to have become so notorious, that John mentions it here in passing as a well-known incident. Why the Synoptists make no mention of the resurrection of Lazarus, has been variously accounted for. It has been suggested that as they lived when the event occurred, the record of it might have involved Lazarus in persecution:

whereas John did not write for a considerable time afterwards. The attempts that have been made to identify Lazarus with any other person mentioned in the New Testament and to identify Mary with Mary Magdalene are questioned.

Ver. 3.—“*Therefore his sisters* (R. V. THE SISTERS THEREFORE) *sent unto Him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick.*” Nothing is said of the messenger who carried the information; and the message bears no request. The sisters seem to have had such faith in the love of Christ for their brother, that all that was necessary was to intimate to Him that Lazarus was ill, in order to draw Him at once from Bethabara to Bethany.

Ver. 4.—“*When Jesus heard that* (R. V. BUT WHEN JESUS HEARD IT), *He said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might* (R. V. MAY) *be glorified thereby.*” “Remarkable language this,” says Dr. Brown, “which from creature lips would have been intolerable. It means that the glory of God manifested in the resurrection of the dead Lazarus would be shown to be the glory, personally and immediately, of the Son.”

Ver. 5.—“*Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.*” Jesus loved all men. The love here is special; it is the love of private friend-

ship. This statement gives the lie to the charge that Christ's ethical teaching excludes the virtue of private friendship.

Ver. 6.—“*When He had heard* (R. V. THEREFORE HE HEARD) *therefore that he was sick, He abode two days still* (R. V. AT THAT TIME) *in the same place where He was.*” “Beyond all doubt, this was just to let things come to their worst, in order to display His glory.” It is weak of Strauss to suggest the moral impropriety of Christ in allowing Lazarus to die, in order to raise him. How immoral, then, must the Infinite One be, to allow whole generations to die without any immediate resurrection! “*Abode two days.*” “There appears,” says a modern expositor, “something quite felicitous in the identification by Wieseler of these two days with the to-day and to-morrow of Luke xiii. 32. And then the passage, Luke xiii. 22, will be identified with this present journey to Bethany. And the profoundly interesting details of Luke xiii. 22; xvii. 10, are a narrative of Jesus' teaching after the reception of this message from the sisters of Bethany. And we see why in the parable Lazarus is the name chosen (Luke xvi. 20) for one desired to be raised from the dead. While the man He loved is dying, Jesus is performing His living mission preparatory to His own death and resurrection.”

HOMILETICS.

These words direct us to the *Family at Bethany*. The verses bring under our attention four things.

Notice—

I.—THE PRIVATE FRIENDSHIP OF CHRIST.

“*Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.*” From this verse, as well as from the other verses in this chapter, it will appear that Christ was on the most friendly terms with this family at Bethany. It is not unlikely that He was on terms of friendship with other such families, although there is reference to no such fact. We have only fragments of His wonderful biography. It has been said, as an objection to Christ, that He never inculcated the duty of friendship. Here He gives a fine example of it. Endowed as He was

with all the instincts and capacities of our common nature, He yearned for friendship. He sought its encouragements and inspirations. As a rule, the greatest natures are always the most social, and crave most for friendly sympathy and intercourse; and in proportion to their labours the more they yearn for the opportunity of retiring into the circle of social love, where they can throw off all professional formality and stiffness, and unbend their faculties in the freedom of love and confidence. Two things in relation to this friendly social circle are worthy of note.

First: None of its members seem to have been amongst His professed disciples. We do not read of them following Him about, nor were they at the last supper. There are many good people who are not formal professors of religion, who notwithstanding are worthy of our confidence and friendship.

Secondly: All of its members were different from each other. They were different in *sex*. Indeed, there could scarcely be a social circle without the two, the woman and the man. Apart from fleshhood, there is a love of sex. The true woman in nature has those spiritual attributes of sensibility, delicacy, affection, intuition, which must ever awaken in a true man, who is endowed with spiritual attributes of another sort,—such as energy, resolution, boldness—special sympathy and regard. The one, in fact, supplements the deficiency of the other; and hence the *real marriage is that of souls*. Any other idea of marriage is degrading and brutish. Hence it is said here, Christ “*loved Martha and Mary.*” The greatest and the purest men, it has been said, have always had the most pleasure in that female society where the ideal of true womanhood is realized. There is no home without a woman. There is a difference, not only in the sex, but in the *attributes* of the members of this circle. Lazarus seemed to have been a reticent man. He does not talk. He represented, perhaps, *thought*. Mary seems to have been of a pensive turn. Her nature was full of quiet affection. Martha, on the other hand, was energetic. She went forth to meet Christ, she served at table, &c. In these three, it has been said, we have represented *thought, feeling, and action*. Such were the members of Christ’s friendly circle. Into this circle, no doubt, He frequently retired, after the toils and insults of the day, to interblend His thoughts and sympathies with loving hearts.

Notice—

II.—THE CHIEF HONOUR OF LIFE.

“*(It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)*” Whatever were the respective excellences of Lazarus and Martha, Mary here stands out in honourable distinction. The narrative of the anointing is given in Mark, as well as in the next chapter of this Gospel. Here it is referred to as something well known, a

fact that had become notorious, and therefore had realized the words of our Lord, Who said, "Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." That act of Mary not only gave a distinction to the other two, shed a glory on them, but made her name fragrant for ever in the Universal Church. The distinction of goodness is the true distinction, is the only praiseworthy and lasting distinction. She obtained immortal honour because she was good; she was good because she loved Christ. The distinctions of wealth, birth, titles, or even of intellect, genius, learning, what are they before the distinction of moral goodness? Little flickering rushlights that must go out, compared to the imperishable star that burns on through the ages. It will be found at last that many of the titled Right Honourables of the earth are Right Abominables in the universe. The only heroes in the great spiritual empire are those who are distinguished by moral goodness. For example, the countless thousands of the men whom Frederick the Great brought into his Seven Years' War included most of the monarchs and nobles and magnates of Europe. But what were they morally? Greedy, grovelling swine, wallowing in the filthiest mud of depravity. And what are they to-day, looked at through history? Caged brutes with which we play and laugh as they grin and snarl at us. Contemptible creatures truly! (See "Frederick the Great," by Carlyle.)

Notice—

III.—THE APPARENT INCONSISTENCY OF LOVE.

"Therefore his sisters sent unto Him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick.* When He had heard therefore that he was sick, He abode two days still in the same place where He was." Two things seem to be inconsistent with His friendship—

First: His permission of the sufferings and death of the brother. It is obvious that they regarded Him as having power sufficient to have kept off pain and mortality from their dwelling. "*If Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died,*" said Martha. As if she had said, "Thy power could have prevented such a heart-breaking catastrophe befalling us: oh, why didst Thou not come?" We can scarcely avoid the impression, that during the four days of their anguish, their confidence in His love would be greatly shaken.

Secondly: The tardiness with which He came to their relief after their message to Him. "*Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick.*" It is true that the message did not contain an explicit request to Him to visit them—so strong, perhaps, was their confidence in His love of their brother and themselves, that they

* See Germ, p. 312.

deemed such a request unnecessary : the mere intimation that he was sick, they thought, would have been enough. In giving the message to the bearer, perhaps they said, "Only say he is sick : that is enough : He will be here : such love as He has for us requires no entreaties." But He came not. The sickness goes on ; Lazarus dies, and is buried ; and well-nigh four long days are gone, and Christ does not appear. And then, when He comes into their village He does not repair at once to their house of mourning, but stops at some other place.

The inconsistency, however, is only apparent. In this case, the permission of the death, and the tardy way in which relief came, which seemed to be inconsistent with love, turned out to be a great blessing. So it has ever been. "Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment," &c. "Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth."

Notice—

IV.—THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF PROVIDENCE.

"*This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.*" It would seem from this that Christ knew all about the sickness of Lazarus before the sisters had sent unto Him. "*Not unto death.*" But he did die, and perhaps was dead at the time. What does He mean ? Is it not this, the end of his sickness is not death—but the "*glory of God ?*" Death is the most impressive event in human history. But it is a mere incident ; not the end. It is an occurrence passing on to something grander and more sublime—the "*glory of God.*" So with all the events of life. What is the "*glory of God ?*" What but the happiness of His loyal subjects ? And all things tend to this. "All things work together for good to them that love God."

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. XL.

THE SICKNESS OF LAZARUS.

"Therefore his sisters sent unto Him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick."—xi. 3.

The words before us present—

I.—A PRIVILEGE OF INCOMPARABLE VALUE.

What is that ? To be loved by Christ. "*He whom Thou lovest.*" To be loved by some beings is of no advantage : their love is carnal, selfish, fickle. But what is Christ's love ?

First : It is *tender*. So tender that in all the afflictions of its objects He is afflicted. They are as dear to Him as Himself. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

Secondly : It is *constant*. His love is not founded upon any mistakes as to our characters : as to what we have been, what we are, or what we shall be ; He knows all about us. Men sometimes withdraw their love because they discover in us imperfections which they never anticipated.

Thirdly : It is *all-sufficient*. It has at its command ample resources to supply all our wants ; ample power to sustain, guard, and bless us through all the future of our being. “He is able to do exceeding abundantly,” &c. To be loved by Christ ! The words before us present—

II.—A TRIAL STRIKINGLY SUGGESTIVE.

Why did He permit Lazarus, His loved friend, to be sick ?

First : Not because it was agreeable to His heart. The sufferings of those we love are always painful to our heart. Is it not so with Him ? “He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.”

Secondly : Not because He could not have prevented it. He Who hushed the storm and raised the dead had power to keep off disease from this loved one. Why then ? It was for some useful end. “Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth.” The affliction of Lazarus was a blessing both to himself and his sisters. It strengthened their faith and intensified their joy. The words present to us—

III.—A FAITH OF REMARKABLE POWER.

“*His sisters*” uttered the words of the text, and they did so, what for ? To induce Him to visit the afflicted one. They used no argument, they urged no entreaty, they employed no persuasion. So strong was their faith in His love that they only said, “*he whom Thou lovest is sick.*” So assured were they of the genuineness and strength of His love, that they felt that the mere statement of the illness was enough ; that persuasion was unnecessary, and would be, perhaps, an offence to His heart. True love requires no persuasion : only state the fact. Where there is true philanthropy no persuasion is necessary to relieve distress. The appeals to benevolence that stream hourly from the press, and that are sounded almost every Sunday from pulpits, imply a sad lack of faith in their authors in the philanthropy of the land. Such appeals are an insult to genuine love.

No. LXXVII.

THE FAMILY AT BETHANY. · (No. 2.)

“Then after that saith He to His disciples, Let us go into Judæa again,” &c.—
xi. 7—16.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 7.— *to His* (R. V. THE) *disciples, Let us go into Judæa again.*” There was an

eternal chronometer that seemed to guide the movements of Christ; hence, in one place in this Gospel He says, "Mine hour is not yet come;" and again, "My time is not yet fully come." He had an hour for everything, and the hour for His going back to Judæa had now struck.

Ver. 8.—"*His* (R. V. THE) *disciples say unto Him, Master* (R. V. RABBI), *the Jews of late sought* (R. V. WERE BUT NOW SEEKING) *to stone Thee; and goest Thou thither again?*" At each of the last two visits to Jerusalem, viz. when He attended the Feast of Tabernacles, and when He attended the Feast of Dedication (chap. viii. 59; x. 31), the Jews had sought to stone Him. His disciples intimate that He ought not to venture any more.

Vers. 9, 10.—"*Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any* (R. V. A) *man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light* (R. V. THE LIGHT IS NOT) *in him.*" "As precisely as the sun measures off the twelve hours, so does God mark out for man his exact time and mission. In that mission he is Divinely safe; for death itself, being in the mission, would be true safety. A man is 'immortal until his work is done.' Opposed to this *day* of mission and duty there is a night side of darkness and wandering. It is the hemisphere outside man's true life. 'No light in him.' A man's divinely-assigned path is a divinely-illuminated path. The light is a blended light, combining rays of reason, conscience, Scripture, Providence, and the blessed spirits. And it is not only a light around a man, but a light in him. The dark wanderer with no light in him, stumbleth."—Whedon.

Ver. 11.—"*These things said* (R. V. SPAKE) *He: and after that* (R. V. THIS) *He saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth* (R. V. IS FALLEN ASLEEP); *but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.*" "Sleepeth," *κεκοίμηται*. Men of all times and countries have been

struck with the resemblance between sleep and death. In Christ's mind, the death of Lazarus was a sleep, inasmuch as it waited an awakening. How did Christ learn now that Lazarus was dead? In the same way that He knew all things.

Ver. 12.—"*Then* (R. V. THE DISCIPLES THEREFORE) *said His disciples* (R. V. UNTO HIM), *Lord, if he sleep* (R. V. IS FALLEN ASLEEP), *he shall do well*" (R. V. HE WILL RECOVER). There is no reason to risk Thy life by going up again to Jerusalem.

Vers. 13, 14.—"*Howbeit Jesus spake* (R. V. NOW JESUS HAD SPOKEN) *of his death: but they thought that He had spoken* (R. V. SPAKE) *of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus* (R. V. THEN JESUS THEREFORE SAID) *unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.*" "εἰρήκει, was speaking. *περὶ τῆς κοιμήσεως τοῦ ὕπνου*, the rest of sleep. The beauty of the narrative is impaired in English by the want of a word corresponding to *κεκοίμηται* in verse 11. Is at rest, does not convey an idea closely enough associated with sleep; but it would be better than sleepeth, for the sake of the explanatory remark that follows in this verse. So awaken, on the other hand, or raise from sleep, Wicl., Rh., would better express *ἐξυπνίσω* than awake him out of sleep, which makes the idea of sleep too prominent by its repetition."—Webster and Wilkinson.

Ver. 15.—"*And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.*" Christ here expresses His gladness at an opportunity of performing a miracle that would be of service to their faith.

Ver. 16.—"*Then said Thomas, which* (R. V. THOMAS THEREFORE WHO) *is called Didymus* (R. V. SAID), *unto his fellowdisciples, Let us also go, that we may die with Him.*" The language implies that the return of his Master to Jerusalem rendered His death inevitable; and that his love for Him was stronger than death, and that life was nothing without Him.

HOMILETICS.

In this portion of the account of the *Family at Bethany* we have three subjects for reflection—the walk of duty, the character of death, and the self-sacrifice of love.

Notice—

I.—THE WALK OF DUTY.

“*Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.*” In Palestine, each day throughout the year was divided into twelve hours. Perhaps the first hour of the day was just breaking when these words were uttered. It may be that the allusion of our Lord is, to the day of human life, or the day of duty. Does He mean,—I have a work to do within a certain period, and to that work I must devote myself without any loss of time? Three remarks are suggested concerning the walk of duty.

First: It is a walk of light. “*Walk in the day.*” The man who, from proper motives and with a single eye, pursues his mission in life, moves in open day. No dark cloud shadows his path, no thick haze hangs over him, he knows what he is about. His race-course lies clearly before him, and he sees the goal.

Secondly: It is a walk of safety. “*If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not.*” “He,” says Luthardt, “who moves within the bounds of duty, does not stumble, makes no false steps; for the light of the world—that is, the will of God—enlightens him. But he who walks outside of the limits of his vocation will err in what he does, since, not the will of God, but his own pleasure, is his guide.”

Thirdly: It is a walk that must be pursued. Though the disciples warned Him of what was likely to occur on His return to Jerusalem, instead of being deterred, Christ says, “*Are there not twelve hours in the day?*” I have got time to do the work that is given Me to perform, and pursuing that work I am safe; for it is the work of day, and I shall not stumble. The path of duty is the path of safety. I shall pursue that path whatever be the result. My duty is to go to Bethany, and I am not afraid of what will happen to Me at Jerusalem.

We have all our “*twelve hours*,” and if in those “*twelve hours*” we pursue the path of duty, we shall move in daylight; we shall not “*stumble.*” Ah me! what stumbling there is amongst the millions in these twelve short hours! The moment a man steps aside from the true path, he is in “*darkness*,” and he stumbles.

Notice—

II.—THE CHARACTER OF DEATH.

Two things are suggested here concerning death.

First: It is not necessarily terrible. “*Our friend Lazarus*

sleepeth ; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said His disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death : but they thought that He had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead." That event, which comes to most men grim and ghastly, robed with terrible associations, is, in the view of Christ, only a "*sleep*," the herald of a coming morning and of renovated activity. There is nothing *alarming* about sleep ; nay, the wearied worker hails it. There is nothing *injurious* about sleep ; nay, it refreshes and re-invigorates. There is nothing *final* about sleep ; nay, it is a step to renewed inspiration and labour. "*Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.*"

Another thing suggested here concerning death is—

Secondly : It is ever expedient. "*I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe ; nevertheless let us go unto him.*" That death is an event not only expedient in this world, but even necessary, will scarcely be doubted. In a sinful world like this, were there no death, human existence would soon become intolerable, and earth a pandemonium.

But we have to do with the death of Lazarus, concerning which Christ said He was "*glad ;*" and glad, because of the high moral end which He knew it would answer. "*I am glad for your sakes that I was not there.*" Incidentally we may remark, that it would seem from this, that if Christ had been there Lazarus would not have died, as if death could not take place in His presence. It has been remarked, that the process of death is prolonged by the clinging sympathy of friends, that the strong love of attendant friends will retain the spirit in the clay. If so, how much more powerful is the presence and sympathy of Christ to detain the spirit to its dissolving tenement ! But the point here is, that the death of Lazarus was expedient for moral ends, "*to the intent that ye may believe.*" The greatest moral need of humanity, is faith in Christ ; and whatever promotes that end is a transcendent blessing. The resurrection of Lazarus tended to that. It would deepen and strengthen the faith-roots, not only of Lazarus, his sisters, and the disciples, but of men in succeeding times. I cannot here forbear quoting a paragraph from a discourse on this passage by one of my dear old ministerial friends, who some twenty years ago was one of the ablest ministers in London.* "*Herein is a picture of Providence. God does these things many times with men. There was transformation here of evil into good. And this is the light which Jesus and His word throw on evil. It is not evil only, or for ever. There is a soul of good in things evil. He may tarry at a distance, but it is only to get nearer soon—nearer to the heart than if He had gone at once. He may answer not a word, as in*

* Rev. Alfred Morris, of Holloway. For the discourse from which the extract is taken, see "The Open Secret," published by Miall & Co., p. 96.

the case of the Syro-phœnician woman, but it is only that He may have to say, 'O woman, great is thy faith!' These are the sayings of the Word of life, 'tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope.' He chastens us for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness; the 'light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' There was elevation here. The material made instrument of the spiritual. The body and the grave were made sacramental by the power of Christ. And thus, as in the world of matter, we get transparent glass from hard flints, and nearly all the properties of gold and platinum, the most precious metals, in a metal (aluminium) obtained from common clay; and the brightest lights reside in lumps of coal and blocks of wood; and the diamond is only charcoal—so in the world of mind and morals, purest lustre and richest worth are, by the faith which worketh by love, extracted from things which in their natural state are both offensive and pernicious. There was *fellowship* here. One sickening and dying for the health, and joy, and higher life of many. 'For us they suffer, and for us they die.'"

Notice—

III.—THE SELF-SACRIFICE OF LOVE.

"Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow-disciples, *Let us also go, that we may die with Him.*" Thomas assumes that Christ's death was inevitable; that no sooner would He reach Jerusalem—and He would be there now in a few hours—than He would meet with a violent death from the hand of His enemies; and with that heroism of soul which can spring only from love, he exclaims, Let us follow Him unto the scene of danger, confront His enemies, and die with Him.

Many years ago I remember reading a very remarkable sermon on this text in the works of the celebrated *John Howe*. I regret to find I have not the book by me, or would indicate the plan, which I then deemed one of distinguished excellence.

This expression of Thomas may be looked upon in two aspects.

First: That love for Christ can overcome the fear of death. Thomas loved Christ, and that love buried all selfish feeling, all dread of death. The love of goodness should always be in man stronger than the love of life. When it is so,—and not otherwise,—man grows into the heroism of true sainthood.

Secondly: That the test of genuine discipleship is readiness to follow Christ into the greatest dangers. Let no man conclude that he is a genuine disciple of Christ, who shrinks from any amount of trial and danger to which the following of Him exposes.

CONCLUSION. How are we morally walking in these "*twelve hours*" of our life? Is it in the straight path of duty? If so, the

daylight will be on us, and our steps will be secure. Do we regard death as an end, or as a means to a moral end, as Christ regarded the death of Lazarus? Are we prepared, like Thomas, to go with Christ even unto death?

No. LXXVIII.

THE FAMILY AT BETHANY. (No. 3.)

"Then when Jesus came, He found that he had lain in the grave four days already," &c.—xi. 17—27.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 17.—*"Then (R. V. SO) when Jesus came, He found that he had lain (R. V. BEEN) in the grave (R. V. TOMB) four days already."* It was customary for the Jews to bury the corpse soon after death, because decomposition proceeds rapidly in warm climates.

Ver. 18.—*"Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off."* About two miles of our distance.

Ver. 19.—*"And many of the Jews came (R. V. HAD COME) to Martha and Mary, to comfort (R. V. CONSOLE) them concerning their brother."* The family being so much respected, and their home so near to Jerusalem, no doubt a goodly number of mourners came. Seven days were allotted in Palestine to lamentations after the death of a friend.

Ver. 20.—*"Then Martha (R. V. MARTHA THEREFORE), as soon as (R. V. WHEN) she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him: but Mary sat still (R. V. STILL SAT) in the house."* This verse indicates the characteristic difference between the two sisters, the one energetic and practical, the other meditative and devout. How Martha came to know that Christ was in the neighbourhood we are not told. Perhaps a secret message was brought her, and she hurried forth at once.

Vers. 21, 22.—*"Then said Martha (R. V. MARTHA THEREFORE SAID) unto Jesus, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But (R. V. AND EVEN NOW) I know, that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt (R. V. SHALT) ask of God, God will give it Thee" (R. V. GIVE THEE).* Wonderful is the faith in Christ which Martha here indicates. She meant to say,

that death could not have occurred in the presence of Christ; and that at His presence death even would be overcome.

Ver. 23.—*"Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again."* Here is a promise transcending her hope, as appears from the next verse, although she had intimated that He could, through invoking the Eternal, do something for their relief in so great a sorrow.

Ver. 24.—*"Martha saith unto Him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."* She understood His words to refer to the resurrection of the body, and expresses her belief in the general resurrection at the last day.

Vers. 25, 26.—*"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in (R. V. ON) Me, though he were dead (R. V. HE DIE), yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in (R. V. ON) Me shall never die. Believest thou this?"* Ἐγώ εἰμι, &c., &c. "It is clear that He is first speaking of natural life and death, then of spiritual. ἡ ζωή, therefore, is not to be understood merely of renewed life. It expresses what is afterwards implied in ὁ ζῶν as well as in ζήσεται. His power to convey or restore life is not limited to times and seasons. Resurrection from death, as well as original life, depends entirely upon Him. He, and not a succession of physical causes and effects, produced all life at the beginning; and He, and no operation of material forces or natural laws, will re-animate the dead at the resurrection. He therefore, at His pleasure, can give or restore life at any time. In Him,

independently of time, is the whole truth and reality and power of the resurrection. ὁ πιστεύων. In the words 'live' and 'die,' as understood of natural life and death, there is here an obvious and intentional paradox: 'The believer in Me, if you suppose him to die, shall live; while the living believer, ὁ ζῶν καὶ πιστεύων, shall never die;' or, 'Belief in Me shall ensure life after death, and ensure life against death.' ζῶν καὶ is introduced to give effect to the apparent paradox, by marking the supposed contrast of the two cases. The solution is, that in reality there is no such thing as death to the believer in Christ. And this fact is stated in two forms: first, that the believer, though he die in the body, yet for all that he shall live; secondly, that the life of the believer is continuous and eternal, not subject to anything that can be rightly called death. The former statement is meant to meet the case of the departed, as dead in the body. The latter, to meet our own case, as living both in the body and the spirit. The life spoken of in the words ζωὴ and ζήσεται, is not to be confounded with the resurrection of the body, much less to be limited to it. The life is more and higher than the resurrection, involving it, however, as part of its manifestation.

It is to be observed that our Lord first spoke of the present and temporary resurrection of Lazarus (ver. 23). Martha then spoke of the future and general resurrection (ver. 25). Then He rises beyond this to the source and cause of spiritual and eternal life, quits the specific idea of resurrection, and concentrates His and our attention upon that of life in Him which the living and the departed believers equally enjoy. καὶ ἀποθάνῃ, 'though he die,' ζήσεται, 'shall live again,' as in Matt. ix. 18, εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, rendered in the Collect of the Burial Service, 'Shall not die eternally.' And doubtless this is the true meaning of the promise here given. We must interpret the phrase, however, as signifying simply never, as in the parallel passage, chap. viii. 51, 52.—*Webster and Wilkinson.*

Ver. 27.—"She saith unto Him, Yea, Lord: I believe (R. V. I HAVE BELIEVED) that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come (R. V. EVEN HE THAT COMETH) into the world." "I believe," literally, I have believed. This was her settled faith. Augustine, paraphrasing this, says, "When I believed that Thou wert the Son of God, I believed also that Thou wert the resurrection and the life, with all the corresponding benefits to us."

HOMILETICS.

In this portion of the account of the *Family at Bethany* we shall consider the social sadness of death, the extraordinary claim of Christ, and the noble confession of faith.

I.—THE SOCIAL SADNESS OF DEATH.

The death of Lazarus had made many sad, spread a dark shadow over the hearts of not a few. Whilst Martha's grief took the form of restless excitement, Mary's held her at home in silent solitude. The neighbours too were affected with the saddening touch of sorrow: "*Many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.*" The God of love has implanted in human hearts such a mighty and mystic tie of sympathy, that a painful event personal to one will touch many into grief; the groan of one will vibrate on the heart-strings of many. The noble mother of a large family writhes in agony on her death-bed. By her pure life and beneficent ministries she has won the love of all around her; her neighbours "called her

blessed." Who is the sufferer? Not merely the dying mother, but all who loved her suffer. The mental anguish of her dear children and attached husband is in some respects far deeper and intenser than the physical pains of the dying one. There is an enormous amount of vicarious suffering in the human family. The bodily sufferings of one become the mental anguish of many. In all the lanes, alleys, and streets of social life there are those moving about who are bearing in their hearts the miseries of others. The more love a man has in him, the larger the amount of vicarious suffering that he will endure in a world of trial and sorrow. Hence, He Who had more love in Him than all the race besides—Who was love itself, Divine, incarnate, unbounded love—became while here a "Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." To suffer for others by sympathy is not only natural, but Christly. We are commanded to "bear each other's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

The words lead us to consider—

II.—THE EXTRAORDINARY CLAIM OF CHRIST.

"*I am the Resurrection and the Life.*" What words are these? Such words never sounded on this earth before. No man before ever gave utterance to such language. Had any other but Christ pronounced them, they would have sounded as astounding arrogance and blasphemy the most revolting. But from Him they seemed to flow naturally; they chime in, not only with His professions, but with His antecedent life of superhuman excellence. What can they mean? Interpreters disagree. Who shall penetrate into their import? Who shall sound their abyss? It is clear, I think, from the circumstances under which Christ uttered these words, as well as from the interpretation of them by Martha, that Christ did not mean *moral* death, but *physical*—the death of the body. But if this be the case, how can it be explained that he that believeth on Him shall never physically die; or, that if he had physically died, he should live again? We suggest three facts which seem to be implied in the expression—

First: That death, whatever it is, is a great evil. What is death in the Bible sense? It is not the mere dissolution of the body, the return of the organized dust back to its primitive elements. This dissolution seems to be a natural event—as natural as birth and growth. It is, for many reasons, highly probable that, had man never sinned, this dissolution would have taken place. Like all organized bodies, man's body would have gone back to dust. The death, I take it, threatened as the consequence of his sin, is something over and above this, something that gave it a moral significance and a terror which it otherwise would not have

possessed. "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," which means literally, *dying thou shalt die*. The language implies the idea of *intensity* rather than of certainty. It seems to me to mean this: Thy death, man, in case thou sinnest, shall indeed be death,—shall be a far more terrible thing than the death of those creatures that thou seest expiring around thee. It is sin that invests this event with its terrible significance. Sin is its "sting," that which gives it virus and agony to the man. Sin clothes this event with many terrible attributes, such as—(1.) *Physical sufferings*. Had there been no sin, the body might have returned to dust without any pain. (2.) *Grievous disappointments*. Had man not sinned, he would have returned to the dust without any broken purposes. (3.) *Social disruptions*. Had man not sinned, he would have returned to dust without the rupturing of any tender ties; he would have passed away in the full hope of meeting the survivors soon again. (4.) *Moral forebodings*. Two things make death especially terrible to us—the fear lest it should be the end of our being, and the fear lest it should be the end of our happiness.

Take away all these elements from physical dissolution—take away from it its physical suffering, mental disappointments, social disruptions, and its moral forebodings, and what is it? A simple natural event, that might be hailed as a blessing. These things make death *death*; and this, I think, is what is meant by death everywhere in the New Testament. It is not the event; it is the *curse*, the misery, the wretchedness connected with it. Perhaps the word *death* might in the Scriptures be rendered *curse*. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely *be cursed*." "By one man sin entered into the world, and *the curse* by sin." This view of death will throw light on many ambiguous passages, such, for instance, as "the wages of sin is death." If death there meant only physical dissolution, the wages are both inadequately and generally very tardily paid. Again: "To be carnally minded is death." All ungodly men are "carnally minded"; and there is no physical death in that state of mind. Again, we read that "Christ hath abolished death," &c. Now, if death in these cases means physical dissolution, there is scarcely truth in it; for that goes on. Men die as regularly since His advent, eighteen centuries ago, as they did before. Death is as great a conqueror as ever. But if it means curse, or misery, then it is true that Christ hath destroyed and abolished all that in the experience of His disciples. The fear is removed; the sting is gone. Another fact suggested is—

Secondly: That from this evil Christ is the great Deliverer. "*I am the Resurrection and the Life*." Christ is life,—the original, fountal, absolute life. "I am He that liveth," &c. He is the resuscitating life too—the *Resurrection*. Not only does He create new life, but He resuscitates the old. Now, understanding death

in the sense indicated, viz. as the curse of sin, we know that Christ is the "*Resurrection*" in this respect: He delivers men from sin. "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Again: "He hath abolished death." In the experience of all those in all ages who have trusted in Him, He has been the "*Resurrection and the Life*." He has taken away the sting of death, turned the forbidding monster into an attractive friend, so that they have desired to depart, &c. The other fact suggested is—

Thirdly: That from this evil He delivers on the condition of trust in Him. "*He that believeth in Me, though he were dead yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.*"* He that trusteth in Him,—not in what men say about Him, not merely in the facts of His life, or the doctrines of His teaching, but *in Him*, as the living, loving Son of God, the Saviour of the world—shall never die; that is, shall never know the curse of death, that which makes death terrible. St. Paul, as well as hundreds more, have experienced this. He said, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin: but thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." The words lead us to consider—

III.—THE NOBLE CONFESSION OF FAITH.

"*Believest thou this? She said unto Him, Yea, Lord, I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.*" The preceding verses show that before this Martha had a certain amount of faith. She believed that Christ had the power to *prevent death*.

"*If Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.*" Whether she had as yet risen to the true conception of His Messiahship or not, she evidently regarded Him as endowed with supernatural power. Of what man that she had ever known had she entertained the idea that he could prevent death? She had, like all, seen death going on around her: men dying in her village, dying in the neighbouring city of Jerusalem; and she had witnessed efforts of skill and loving attention to prevent death. But no one had appeared who could do it. But here, in Christ, she knew there was One Who could have done it. Moreover, she believed in the possibility of Christ securing the interposition of God on her behalf. "*But I know that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee.*" She knew that all life was in the hands of God, and believed that Christ had the power to secure His interposition.

* See Germ, p. 323.

She had acknowledged her faith in a *general resurrection of the dead*. A belief in a general resurrection was prevalent among the Pharisees. But now her faith struck a deeper root and pulsated with a new vitality. "*I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God.*"

This is the true confession of faith,—faith in Christ.

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. XLI.

DEATH AVOIDED.

"Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."—xi. 26.

What does this mean? Does it mean—(1.) Freedom from *corporeal death*? Nothing does the world dread so much as death, and nothing would it hail with greater exultation than a deliverance from it. Albeit so long as men continue sinful, a deliverance from corporeal mortality would be an evil rather than a good. Death seems to arrest the course of sin, and to prevent the world from becoming a Pandemonium. Does it mean—(2.) Freedom from *annihilation*? We are in no danger of this, and this in itself is no boon: non-existence is better than a miserable existence. What then does it mean? Generally it means this: that nothing that gives value to life, nothing that makes life worth having shall ever die, if we truly believe in Christ.

I.—THE HEALTHY ACTION OF OUR SPIRITUAL POWERS WILL NEVER CEASE.

What is life without activity? Worthless. And what is activity unless it be healthful? Misery. Faith in Christ secures the healthy action of all our spiritual faculties; the *perceptive, reflective, imaginative, recollective, anticipative*, will work harmoniously for ever.

II.—NOTHING VALUABLE IN OUR SPIRITUAL ACQUISITIONS WILL EVER BE LOST.

What is life without ideas, emotions, memories, habits? A blank. And what is it with those if they are not of a truly virtuous character? Despicable and wretched. But when these acquisitions are holy, life is blessed. Faith in Christ secures the permanency and perfection of all true ideas, affections, principles, habits, &c. "Our works do follow us." We cannot labour in vain in the Lord.

III.—ALL THE SOURCES OF TRUE PLEASURE WILL CONTINUE FOR EVER.

What are the sources of true enjoyment? *Intellectual*—study, &c. *Social*—friendship, usefulness, &c. *Religious*—communion with God, worship. Faith in Christ then:—in *Him*, not in propositions concerning Him; not in what theologians say about Him; but in *Him* as the living, loving, personal Son of God and Saviour of mankind, is the condition of a happy immortality.

No LXXIX.

THE FAMILY AT BETHANY. (No. 4.)

"And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee," &c.—xi. 28—32.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 28.—*"And when she had so said, she went her way (R. V. AWAY), and called Mary her sister secretly, saying."* "Secretly" implies, perhaps, a mere whisper. Probably Mary had retired to some secluded chamber of the house, as far as possible away from the presence of the Jews who had come to mourn. *"The Master."* Some render it, "the Teacher," or "our Teacher." This family regarded Christ, not merely as their Friend, but as their moral Master, Teacher. *"Is come, and calleth for thee."* It would seem as if Christ required Mary to go forth to Him as unobserved as possible, in order to awaken no public excitement.

Ver. 29.—*"As soon as (R. V. AND SHE WHEN) she heard that, she arose quickly, and came (R. V. WENT) unto Him."* With all the promptitude of affection, she hastened to obey the voice of love.

Vers. 30.—*"Now Jesus was not yet come into the town (R. V. VILLAGE), but was in that (R. V. STILL IN THE) place where Martha met Him."* Bengel remarks, that Jesus did everything with a suitable delay. His tarrying outside the village, somewhere near the burial-ground, which was always outside the town, brought the whole company of Mary's comforters to Him. As they followed her toward the grave, they found themselves in the presence of the Master, and were thus brought into a situation to behold the wondrous miracle.

Ver. 31.—*"The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted (R. V. WERE COMFORTING) her,*

when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily (R. V. QUICKLY) and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth (R. V. SUPPOSING THAT SHE WAS GOING) unto the grave (R. V. TOMB) to weep there." It is customary in the East for survivors to resort for several days to the tombs of their friends, there to pour out their grief at their graves. Nothing was more natural, therefore, for the mourners, when they saw Mary withdraw, than to conclude that she was gone to the grave to weep, and to follow her thither.

Ver. 32.—*"Then when Mary was come (R. V. MARY THEREFORE WHEN SHE CAME) where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying unto Him, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."* "The first stroke of character which distinguishes Mary from Martha is seen in the expression, she '*fell down at His feet.*' The second is, that she says nothing further than, 'Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.' While Martha added to these words, 'and even now I know,' &c. (ver. 22). Mary bursts into tears. Martha may at first strike us as the one who possesses the greater joy in believing; but Mary is the more human and warm in her feelings, and there is more of devotion in the expression of her faith. Her kneeling posture and her tears are more eloquent than the words of Martha. The saying that both utter constitutes a precious trait from life. They made this remark to each other over and over again at the deathbed of Lazarus: 'If He were here!'—*Lange.*

HOMILETICS.

In this portion of the narrative concerning *The Family at Bethany*, we have what may be justly considered *the Gospel message to every man*; and we have it here clearly stated, properly delivered, and rightly received. We have it—

I.—CLEARLY STATED.

"*The Master is come, and calleth for thee.*"* What Martha said to Mary may be regarded as a glorious truth addressed to all men.

First: "*The Master is come.*" Come from heaven, come to this earth, come for every man. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Of all the facts in the history of the world, none is better attested, more important, or more glorious than this.

Secondly: The Master *invites individuals*. "*And calleth for thee.*" It is as true that Christ invites individual men to Him now as that through Martha He invited Mary to Him. He "*calleth for thee*" in the operations of nature, in the events of history, in the workings of conscience, in the ministry of His servants. He "*calleth for thee*," to heal thy diseases, to break thy chains, to enlighten thy judgment, to cleanse thy conscience, to purify thy heart, and to save thy soul. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden," &c. We have this Gospel message—

II.—RIGHTLY DELIVERED.

The way in which Martha delivered the message to her sister is worthy of the imitation of every Gospel minister.

First: She did it *undoubtedly*. She had just seen the Master; she had confessed her faith in Him. "*I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God;*" and she proceeds direct from His presence, filled with the spirit of her mission, to Mary. "*When she had so said*"—that is, when she had made the confession—"she went her way, and called Mary." He who delivers the message without being assured of its truth, is no genuine preacher; that Christ has come and calls for men, must be amongst the most settled convictions in his mind. Any doubting on this subject is a disqualification for the work.

Secondly: She did it *judiciously*. She "*called Mary her sister secretly.*" Why she did it "*secretly*" does not appear. We may be sure it was not from fear on her part; for love is heroic. Probably an interview with Him, before the crowd gathered to witness the grand transaction, was needful to establish her faith, and calm her spirit. There is a prudence necessary in delivering the Gospel message, a prudence which has regard to *times, circumstances, and moods of mind*. We have here this Gospel message—

III.—PROPERLY RECEIVED.

How did Mary receive this message? Just as every hearer of the Gospel should.

First: Promptly. "*As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto Him.*" She did not wait to consult her companions

* See Germ, p. 327.

who were with her in the house: without the pause of a moment, she crossed the threshold of her house and hastened forth to Christ. The Gospel call demands instant attention. "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." The delay of a moment after the call has come, is at once wrong and perilous. "To-day, if ye will hear His voice."

Secondly: Resolutely. "*Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met Him.*" On an occasion so full of excitement, it required no little nerve for Mary to leave her home, pass beyond the boundaries of her village to the spot where Jesus stood in sublime solitude. It requires that the Gospel call should be attended to with a determination of soul. There are so many opposing forces, so many unfavourable considerations, that nothing less than invincibility of purpose is required. "I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest."

Thirdly: Fearlessly. "*The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.*" Well she knew that her going forth to meet Jesus would be contrary to the wish of the Jews in her house, if they knew it. Indeed, when she broke away from them, they did not seem to have the slightest suspicion that she was going to Jesus; they concluded that she was going to weep at the grave of her brother. Defiant of their prejudices and wishes, she obeys the command. Thus it must be with those who would comply with the invitations of the Gospel; they must be fearless of all opposition; they must dare persecution, if need be.

Fourthly: Devoutly. "*Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet.*" At His feet she broke into tears, not mere tears of grief for her brother, but rather, perhaps, of ecstasy and delight at seeing once more Him Who was more to her than brother, or sister, or the world—the Christ, the Son of God. "*Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.*" Thou art mightier than death. My brother had been living, hadst Thou been here.

CONCLUSION. Here is—(1.) A fact in which humanity should rejoice. "*The Master is come, and calleth for thee.*" Thank God for the advent of this Heavenly Teacher, man's Moral Master, Guide, and Saviour. What fools are those—alas! how numerous—who accept not His invitation, and hasten not to His presence! Here is—(2.) An example which preachers should imitate. Like Martha, they should proclaim the advent and sound the invitation, and do so undoubtingly, fired with the spirit of the message, yet with godly judiciousness. Here is—(3.) Conduct which Gospel hearers should follow. Like Mary, they should go promptly, resolutely, fearlessly, and devoutly, to meet the Heavenly Teacher.

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. XLII.

THE LATEST ARRIVAL.*

“The Master is come, and calleth for thee.”—xi. 28

I shall draw my illustrations from the facts narrated in this chapter, as I proceed to ask and answer the following questions :—

I.—WHO HAS COME ?

“*The Master*”—One who rules, governs, directs, or has supreme authority. How appropriate the title ! He is Master of man and all his surroundings ; Master of the mighty forces of nature and the laws by which they are governed ; Master of this mighty planetary system and all the stellar universe ; Master of all animate and inanimate existences, “whether they be thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers ; for all things were created by Him and for Him.”

II.—HOW DID HE COME ?

In our perfect humanity—able to sympathize with us in our sorrows as a Man, and as God to take them away—able to enjoy the innocent festivities of a marriage feast, and to stand weeping with sisters beside their brother's grave ; His heart in each case beating in unison with the company. He came along the dreary road of poverty, persecution, and pain, while every step brought Him nearer to a death of the most awful and ignominious character. This was necessary, that He “might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”

III.—WHEN DID HE COME ?

Not until human sympathy and skill had done their best, and utterly failed. Lazarus is dead. Those loving sisters left nothing undone, kind friends did what they could, and the physician's skill was taxed to the uttermost, but all in vain, for Lazarus grew worse and worse ; soon was still in death. So *spiritually*. With all the tonics and stimulants of natural religion, the genial aid of poetry, the bracing power of science, philosophy, and varied culture, man continued to grow worse and worse ; so that when the Master came, He found the nations “dead in trespasses and sins,” and beyond the power of human recovery.

IV.—WHAT DOES HE SAY ?

He comes to inquire after the cause of our trouble : “*Where have ye laid him ?*” He wants to get face to face with the cause of all

* In revising this germ the author has some doubts as to whether it is really his, although there are some expressions that are undoubtedly his own.

our trouble and sorrow, that He may take it away. My brother, "*the Master is come,*" and is inquiring after that evil heart of yours which has caused you so much sorrow. God help you to bring Him right up to it, and say, "Blessed Master, here it is—foul and polluted; but if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean, and here I give Thee unrestricted sway." Do this, and you will feel the pulsations of an imparted life which will lift you out of your spiritual sepulchre, and enable you to throw off your carnal grave-clothes, with a new song in your mouth, even praises to our God.

V.—FOR WHOM DOES HE CALL?

"*For thee.*" Learn from this, religion is a *personal* thing. "The Master is come, and calleth for *thee.*" Take a note of this,—*for thee.* My brother, unless you heed the call of this blessed Master, and come personally in contact with Him, and bring Him face to face with your polluted guilty spirit, His arrival will but deepen your condemnation and make darker your doom. "*The Master is come.*" His stay may not be long, but He "*calleth for thee.*"

"He now stands knocking at the door
Of every sinner's heart."

No. LXXX.

THE FAMILY AT BETHANY. (No. 5.)

"When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said," &c.—xi. 33—38.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 33.—"*When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.*" ἐνέβριμήσατο τῷ πνεύματι, καὶ ἐτάπαξεν ἑαυτόν. Some regard the verse as expressing indignation, some grief; *Alford* regards it "to be moved with indignation." Dr. Samuel Davidson translates it, "greatly moved in spirit." But who can analyze the emotions of a Mind which so infinitely transcends our minds, both intellectually and morally?

Ver. 34.—"*And said, Where have ye laid him?*" A question asked, not, of course, for the sake of information; but in order to awaken interest, according to His custom.

Ver. 35.—"*Jesus wept.*" One of the shortest of sentences, but fraught with an unfathomable meaning.

Ver. 36.—"*Then said the Jews* (R. V. THE JEWS THEREFORE SAID), *Behold*

how He loved him!" These bystanding Jews interpreted the flowing tears of Jesus as a demonstration of His love for Lazarus; but had those tears no reference to the ravages of sin, the unbelief and the moral corruption to be seen in the men around Him?

Ver. 37.—"*And* (R. V. BUT) *some of them said, Could not this Man, which opened the eyes of the* (R. V. HIM THAT WAS) *blind, have caused that even this man* (R. V. THIS MAN ALSO) *should not have died?*" (R. V. DIE.) Some interpreters regard this speech as having malice in it, and as intended to express the idea that Christ either lacked the disposition or the power to prevent death. Perhaps they wished to insinuate that His inability to raise Lazarus, proved by His tears, was sufficient to show that He never opened the eyes of the blind, as reported, and that therefore He was an impostor. Others, however, give

another interpretation, and regard the expression as indicating no malicious disposition, no doubt of His past miracles, but simply wonder that this miraculously endowed Being should allow a friend to die.

Ver. 38.—“*Jesus therefore again groaning in Himself cometh to the grave* (R. V. TOMB). *It* (R. V. NOW IT) *was a cave, and a stone lay upon* (R. V. AGAINST) *it.*” In some ancient nations cremation was practised, and the burnt ashes of the dead were deposited in urns. This, however, was not the custom of the Jews; they buried in the earth. Survivors closed the eyes, washed the body, perfumed it, swathed

it in numerous folds of linen with spices enclosed. Burial-places were always without the cities, but within easy reach; they were caves, either natural or hewn. In some of these caves several persons could stand upright. In such a cave the body of Lazarus was placed, and its mouth was closed with a massive stone fitted to the aperture. The tomb that is now pointed out to travellers as the tomb of Lazarus, is a chamber in a rock underground, entered by twenty-six irregular, rough, winding steps cut out in the rock. But there are serious doubts as to whether this be the real spot.

HOMILETICS.

In this portion of the narrative concerning the *Family at Bethany*, we are led to consider three subjects.

I.—DEATH’S INFLUENCE UPON HUMAN HEARTS.

“*When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.*” The death of Lazarus was an event that touched the hearts of the sisters, of the Jews, and of Jesus, and made them *all* weep. Here is a community of feeling and of tears. How many wept now! One weeper will make others who are present weep, even though they neither know nor feel the cause of distress. It has been said, that what will have but little influence on a few persons will often thrill an assembly of thousands. “There is a kind of sympathetic electricity in a crowd, by means of which the small agitations are united, so that, like a wave, they strike each soul with a force equal to the sum of all their forces.” The weepers here did not weep for the same reasons. The reason of Mary’s tears was not felt by the unbelieving Jews; and the reason of our Saviour’s tears was different to that, not only of the Jews, but of the sisters also. All tears are not of the same character; there are tears of reality, which are the automatic and involuntary expressions of the heart, and tears of falsehood, feigned and hypocritical and therefore voluntary. There are the tears of joy as well as sorrow, tears of disappointment and tears of hope, tears of love and tears of anger, tears of grief and tears of rapture, tears of weakness and tears of power. Tears show the mysterious connection between the soul and the body. One solitary thought springing up involuntarily in the mind, can open at once the lachrymose fountains and make showers run down the face.

But the one great event that affected all the hearts here, was death. And this event has lost none of its power; it strikes sadness into all souls. Hardened as humanity is, there are, I trow, but few in any age whose hearts death has not smitten. Who amongst the giddiest has ever laughed in the presence of a corpse? Who amongst the most callous has not had convulsive throbs as he felt the cold touch of death? Why should death thus produce this distress in men? Other creatures seem to look on it with calmness. They will tread on the dead bodies of their young with indifference. Is it because death is repugnant to our nature? or because of the ideas we associate with it? Perhaps both. The words lead us to consider—

II.—MAN'S MISINTERPRETATION OF DIVINE PHILANTHROPY.

"Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how He loved him! And some of them said, Could not this Man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?"

"Jesus wept." This short sentence is a sun in a spark, a universe in an atom. The word is not the same as when He wept over Jerusalem; there it means He wept aloud, here He wept silently. He wept in sympathy with the other weepers. Oh those tears of His! they were drops from the boundless ocean of His love! The Jews regarded the tears as an expression of His love for Lazarus. *"Behold how He loved him!"* And His love was to them a wonder. *"And some of them said, Could not this Man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?"*

First: The difficulty which they now felt has always been prevalent. It was this: Why—seeing that Jesus so loved Lazarus—did He allow him to die? It could not be from the lack of power, for He had wrought other miracles, such as opening the eyes of the blind. Where is Christ's consistency in loving a man, and yet allowing him to suffer and to die? Now this has always been a difficulty with men. Men are always asking why, if Christ loves us, does He allow us to be afflicted with diseases, distressed by disappointments, crushed by poverty, heart-broken by bereavements? Is the suffering which is everywhere prevalent amongst His disciples, consistent with His love?

Secondly: This prevalent difficulty is capable of solution. Why? Not because suffering in any form can be pleasing to His benevolent nature; not because He could not prevent it; but because His disciples need it. "No suffering for the present is joyous, but grievous; nevertheless it worketh out the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby." Pain is a beneficent minister. Pain whips the dormant intellect into action; indeed, all our sciences owe their existence to pain. Pain rouses us to action against evils that would prove our ruin. Pain detaches

our sympathies from the material and the evanescent, and turns them to the spiritual and the eternal. Pain is often the curative element in the cup of life. What could the world of corrupt humanity do without pain? Hence its existence is love: "Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth." You may say to Christ, "*He whom Thou lovest*" is heart-broken with disappointment, is writhing with agony, is overwhelmed with sorrow, is famishing with hunger. Very well, the loved one needs it, and love does it.

The words lead us to consider—

III.—CHRIST'S LAMENTATION OVER HUMAN UNBELIEF.

"*Jesus therefore again groaning in Himself cometh to the grave.*" Why did He groan? Not because Lazarus was dead, for that event He could have prevented. Not because Lazarus was in his grave, for He was conscious of the power to raise him, and He was now about to exercise it. Was it because of the ravages of sin which He saw everywhere around Him—saw in the ages past and the world over? No doubt this would deeply affect Him. Indeed He seemed always affected when He came into conscious contact with this, even in its smallest aspects. Thus, for example, we read in Mark vii. 34, when a man deaf and dumb was brought to Him, that He "*sighs*." Looking over Jerusalem, He seemed to break into a wild agony of grief; and down in Gethsemane He falls prostrate under the sense of the enormity of the ravages of sin, and exclaims: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful." But perhaps that which was the immediate cause of His present sorrow, was the unbelief of the people around Him. This unbelief even the sisters had exhibited, when they said, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." As if they had said, Thou mightest have prevented his death, but Thou canst do nothing now, for Thou canst not restore him. And again they showed it when they exclaimed, "Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days." The expression of the Jews: "Could not this Man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" is full of unbelief. Why is the unbelief of men so distressing to the heart of Christ? Why does it make Him groan and shudder?

First: Because, unless they believe in Him, He cannot save them. Faith in Him, we are assured, both by philosophy, history, consciousness, and the Bible, is essential to lift the human soul into sympathy and fellowship with the Eternal Fountain of purity and blessedness.

Secondly: Because, unless they believe in Him, His beneficent mission into the world is frustrated. He could not do "many mighty works" in one place "because of their unbelief." In all departments of action men's unbelief prevents God helping them.

Would the agriculturist have God to perform mighty works on his fields, covering them in autumn with abundant crops, then he must have faith in the laws of nature and the capacity of the soil. Would the poor man have God to perform mighty works for him, raise him from penury and obscurity to wealth and influence, he must have faith in the principle that the "hand of the diligent maketh rich." Would the statesman have God to perform mighty works for his country, he must in all the measures that he proposes and the laws he enacts, have faith in the truth that "righteousness exalteth a nation." It is so in everything. Read Hebrews xi.

No. LXXXI.

THE FAMILY AT BETHANY. (No. 6.)

"Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto Him, Lord, by this time he stinketh : for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"—xi, 39, 40.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 39.—*"Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto Him, Lord, by this time he stinketh : for he hath been dead four days."* The fearful reality of the grave in which her brother has lain four days disturbs the practical woman, and shakes her faith. She thinks a scandal may result from the bursting forth of the odour of corruption, especially in the presence of so many people from Jerusalem. True, it follows from the reason she assigns for her remark, that she does not already perceive this odour. For he hath been dead four days. It is a proverb in the Talmud and the Targum, that corruption sets in the third

day after death. As the sister of the dead man, she shudders at the thought of seeing her brother in a putrefying state, of witnessing the exposure of that countenance upon which corruption has already set its seal."—*Lange*.

Ver. 40.—*"Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldst believe (R. V. THAT IF THOU BELIEVEST), thou shouldest see the glory of God!"* God's glory is the manifestation of Himself; and this manifestation to the individual soul depends upon faith. We need not understand that the miracle depended on her faith; but her perception of the glory of God depended on her faith.

HOMILETICS.

There are two subjects of thought in this portion of the narrative concerning the *Family at Bethany*.

Here we have—

I.—CHRIST'S CONDESCENSION IN EMPLOYING MAN IN CARRYING OUT HIS PURPOSES.

"Take ye away the stone." Could not Christ do this Himself? Yes; not only by the touch of His hand, but by the volition of His

mind. Does He need help in performing a miracle? The idea is absurd. He did it, not for His sake, but for theirs. In doing it they would not help Him, but help themselves. No principle is more clearly revealed throughout all sentient existences than this, that God does not do for a creature that which He has given the creature power to do for itself. He carries food to the plants because they cannot go in search of it; but all to whom He has given the power of locomotion must go in search of their food or die. This principle is manifestly true in relation to man. He requires man to work out the powers with which He has endowed him. In this ordinance man is both honoured and helped.

First: Christ could *feed* us without our labour. He Who fed by miracle multitudes on the height of Capernaum of old, could feed all human beings on the face of the earth without any labour or effort of their own. He could bring the necessary daily meal into every homestead. But He does not do so, and this is well for man. The mental devisings and the physical toilings necessary under the present system to get food are scarcely less essential, not only to man's strength but to man's subsistence, than food itself. To the lazy farmer, whose grounds are a wilderness, God says, "*Take ye away the stone.*" You do your work, and I will do Mine.

Secondly: Christ could *enlighten* us without our labour. As He has given to every insect a sufficient instinctive light to secure its well-being, He might have given us a sufficient knowledge on all the questions necessary to our interests. He might have planted in our mental heavens the stars of all true science, physical, intellectual, and moral. But He has not done so. This also is well. The intellectual and moral effort, the study and the perseverance required to master even the simplest of the sciences, are better for us than the possession of all knowledge. The ideas we get for ourselves are infinitely more valuable to us than those that are imparted to us; convictions self-produced are a thousand times more valuable than all the creeds of Christendom. Hence, to the ignorant men, whose mental domain is, like the vineyard of the sluggard, in ruins, God says, "*Take ye away the stone,*" go and work.

Thirdly: Christ could have given us the means of *spiritual improvement* without our labour. He could have caused Bibles and the best books to come down like the manna of old and surround our dwellings. He could have planted churches and chapels, schools and libraries, in every mountain, in every corner of every street in every town. But He has not done so; this also is well. We must buy our Bibles, procure our books, establish our libraries, build our churches and our schools: and all this is priceless discipline. To a man destitute of the means of spiritual

improvement, God says, "*Take ye away the stone,*" and set to work. The process is better than the result. In the deed there is the blessedness.

The verses suggest—

II.—HUMAN UNBELIEF IN SUGGESTING DIFFICULTIES AS TO THE FULFILMENT OF HIS PURPOSES.

"*By this time he stinketh.*" How can it be done? Not only are the senses dulled, the blood frozen, the limbs sealed, but decomposition has taken place, the disintegration of the particles is proceeding. No doubt Martha felt the difficulties were insuperable, and that there was no hope.

Now there is a tendency everywhere in men to suggest difficulties in relation to the fulfilment of Christ's purposes. Christ has proposed to work out the moral reformation of mankind, to "put away sin" from all institutions, books, trades, professions, tribes, nations, and individuals on the face of the earth. This, and nothing else, is His purpose. But what difficulties are suggested on all hands! We are pointed to the obstructions, and told that they are insurmountable. We are pointed to their *number*, errors, habits, lusts, prejudices, institutions, domestic, political, social, and religious—add them together, and how great the sum! We are pointed to their *strength*, fixed as firmly as the granite mountains, more deeply and firmly rooted than the oaks of the forest. We are pointed to the *little progress His purpose is making*. It is said that after the lapse of nearly nineteen centuries the obstructions are as numerous and as firm as ever; and that notwithstanding the progress of intelligence and civilization the cause of real moral reformation has made but little advance. Well, moral humanity is in the grave, its sepulchre is deep, and massive is the stone which covers it up; and, like Martha, we may say it "*stinketh.*" And truly its disgusting odour loads the atmosphere. Still, be not faithless, but believing. Christ is approaching the tomb. "The hour cometh, and now is, when all that are in their graves shall hear His voice."

No. LXXXII.

THE FAMILY AT BETHANY. (No. 7.)

"Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid," &c.
—xi. 41—44.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Vers. 41, 42.—"*Then* (R. V. SO) *they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid.* (R. V. OMITTS THIS CLAUSE.) *And Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard* (R. V. HEARDEST) *Me. And I*

knew that Thou hearest Me always: but because of the people (R. V. MULTITUDE) *which stand by* (R. V. STANDETH AROUND) *I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent* (R. V. DIDST SEND) *Me.*" "This is the only instance in which our Lord uttered a prayer

before performing a miracle. Nothing can be more dignified than His communion with His Father in these words, which are such as no other person could have employed. He thanks Him for the result before it was obtained; and by implying that there was no necessity for formal prayer on His own account, He further implies His perfect union in the Spirit with the Father. *διὰ τὸν ὄχλον*. The people were to be taught now, by a great example, a phenomenon, the meaning of such assertions as those, v. 19—21, 36, 37; viii. 16."—*Webster*.

Ver. 43.—"*And when He thus had (R. V. HAD THUS) spoken, He cried with a loud voice.*" It does not seem to have been His custom to speak loudly: "He did not cause His voice to be heard in the street," &c. He did so now, not because He would move the dead by it more than by a silent volition, but in order to call the attention of the multitude to the stupendous miracle He was about to perform. "*Lazarus, come forth.*" How must this voice have affected the multitude, thrilling all hearts!

Ver. 44.—"*And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes.*" He came forth entangled

in the graveclothes from which, it seems, he could not disengage himself. "*Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.*" "It is the remark of *Ferness*, that at first view there seems to be here a descent in the narrative to a trifling particular; but when it is considered into what consternation the bystanders must have been thrown at the sight of the dead man coming to life, rendering them, by the palsy of fear, incapable for the moment of assisting Lazarus in his vain struggles to free himself from the folds in which he was wrapped hand and foot, the sublime self-possession of Jesus appears in the important command by which He quietly bade them loose the graveclothes and set the newly risen man at liberty. *Priestly* observes, that there was a natural gradation in the three miracles by which Jesus raised persons to life. The first was a person just dead, the second was one who was carried out to be buried, and the third had been dead and buried four days."—*Livermore*. It was an early legend of the Church, that Lazarus was now thirty years of age, and lived after his resurrection another thirty years.

HOMILETICS.

In this portion of the narrative of the *Family at Bethany*, we have the *Remarkable words of Christ at the grave of Lazarus*. Notice—

I.—THE WORDS WHICH HE ADDRESSED TO HEAVEN.

"*Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always.*"

In this solemn and sublime appeal to Heaven we have—

First: His recognition of God as His Father. He was the Son of God in a higher sense than any other moral creature ever has been, or perhaps ever will be—a relationship of mutual resemblance and love. (1.) A higher mutual *resemblance*. He was "the express image of His person." (2.) A higher mutual *love*. The Father loved Him in a sense higher than that in which He loved any other human being. "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And He loved the Father supremely. The Father's will was the absolute law of His life.

Secondly: His consciousness of His Father's regard for Him. "*I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou*

hearest Me always." Ever in close communion with His Father. And to every aspiration of His He felt His Father's response. "*Always*"—no exception, not a word of true prayer is ever lost.

Thirdly: His consideration for men in giving utterance to His devotions. "*But because of the people which stand by I said it.*" Audible words, though not *essential* to worship, and having no influence on the Infinite Father, still are often useful to our fellow-men. "*Because of the people which stand by I said it.*" *Clarke* supposes that the audible prayer here to God was intended to show that the miracle was not by Satanic power, but truly Divine. Words in prayer are accidents, not essential. Prayer is a spirit, a spirit of dependence on God, ever abiding, ever inspiring and controlling. It uses words, not to inform or influence the Infinite, but to stimulate devotion in self and others. The prayer of Christ on this occasion is not recorded; probably it had no words. His words of thanksgiving, which were for the good of the bystanders, are recorded. We have here—

II.—THE WORDS WHICH HE ADDRESSED TO THE DEAD.

"*And when He had thus spoken, He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.*" Observe—

First: His words to the dead were personal. "*Lazarus.*" He calls him by name. When He called back to life the daughter of *Jairus*, He did not pronounce her name, but said, "*Maid.*" When He spoke life to the widow's son, He made no mention of his name, but said, "*Young man.*" But here the name is mentioned. Why? "*He calls him by name, lest He should bring up all the dead,*" says *Augustine*. What a silly remark for a man of acknowledged genius to make! Observe—

Secondly: His words to the dead were earnest. "*Cried with a loud voice.*" He could have done it with a whisper, nay, with a silent volition; but He raised His voice, probably to the highest note. And how high was that? Probably His voice had a force and a fulness that would reverberate among the hills and be heard afar. He spoke thus undoubtedly for the sake of the bystanders, to startle them into solemn thought. Observe—

Thirdly: His words to the dead were mighty. They struck life into *Lazarus*, made the still heart beat again, and the frozen blood glow and bound through the veins. "*He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes.*"

It is trifling to say, as some do, that *Lazarus* was only apparently dead; or with *Strauss*, that this is a myth. *Lazarus* was literally dead. Poetry has thus described the scene:—

"And instantly, bound hand and foot,
And borne by unseen angels from the cave,
He that was dead stood with them. At the word

Of Jesus the fear-stricken Jews unloosed
 The bands from off the folding of his shroud :
 And Mary, with her dark veil thrown aside,
 Ran to him swiftly, and cries, *Lazarus!*
 My brother Lazarus! And tore away
 The napkin she had bound about his head,
 And touched the warm lips with her fearful hand,
 And on his neck fell weeping. And while all
 Lay on their faces prostrate, Lazarus
 Took Mary by the hand, and they knelt down
 And worshipped Him Who loved them.”—*Willis*.

Here we have—

III.—THE WORDS WHICH HE ADDRESSED TO LIVING MEN.

“*Jesus said unto them, Loose him, and let him go.*” Here again, as in the command, “Take ye away the stone,” we have the principle of man co-operating with the Divine. Men could not raise Lazarus from the grave, hence Christ did it; but they could unloose the bands with which his limbs were bound, and this for their own sake He required them to do. “Christ had great respect for human agency, and employed it when He could. Men must cast in the net, though the draught of fishes is miraculous; men must carry the baskets, though the bread is Divinely provided; men must fill the water-pots with water, though Jesus turns it into wine; and men must open the grave and unbind the body, though He only ‘quickeneth Whom He will.’ And it is so still, and in all things. The use of man’s agency is an ordinance of God. It is not that God needs it, for God provides it: it is that men need it, and therefore, as a merciful appointment, in every department of life, we have to do what our hand findeth to do, the thing to which it is fitted, and for which it is competent; and in connection with that we may expect His rich and varied blessing.”—*A. J. Morris*.

Were the resurrection of Lazarus to be looked at as an illustration of the moral resurrection of a dead soul, then three facts might be noted.

First: That the resurrection of a dead soul is effected by Christ.

Secondly: That a dead soul, when raised, may still be entangled. Just as the body of Lazarus, after he had left the grave, was bound in graveclothes, so old prejudices, associations, habits, often entangle a risen soul.

Thirdly: That the disentangling of a risen soul requires the aid of the living. “*Loose him, and let him go.*” The work of the living Church and a living ministry is to loose encumbered souls. “*Loose him, and let him go.*”

No. LXXXIII.

DIFFERENT EFFECTS OF THE SAME REVELATION UPON
DIFFERENT MEN.

"Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on Him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done."—xi. 45, 46.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 45.—*"Then many (R. V. MANY THEREFORE) of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus (R. V. BEHELD THAT WHICH HE) did, believed on Him."* In the case of many of the Jews the grand moral end of the miracle was answered, it produced faith—faith in Christ as the true Messiah, and with this faith a new and glorious life in the souls of the believers. As Lazarus was raised from the material grave, they were raised from the grave of prejudice, worldliness, and unbelief. In their case it was true as Christ had said: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God."

Ver. 46.—*"But some of them went their ways (R. V. AWAY) to the Pharisees, and told them what (R. V. THE) things (R. V. WHICH) Jesus had done."* Whilst many were convinced, there were those who remained in unbelief. Thus is illustrated the passage that those who would not believe Moses and the prophets would not believe "though one rose from the dead." The statement here is an incidental argument in favour of the honesty of the evangelical historian. A partisan would have concealed the fact that such a mighty miracle did not convince all, but left some hardened and hostile.

HOMILETICS.

We have here *Different effects of the same revelation upon different men.*

First: Many believed. *"Many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on Him."* They were convinced that He was the true Messiah, the Son of God, and became His disciples. (1.) In their case the moral end of the miracle was answered. They saw the "glory of God." (2.) In their case the end of Christ's mission was answered. He became their Saviour. "He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life."

Secondly: Some did not believe. *"But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done."* Here is an illustration of the words, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one arose from the dead." The Pharisees had interests and predilections opposed to Christ. They knew that His prosperity would be their ruin.

Now the different effect of the same revelation upon different minds is—

I.—A COMMON OCCURRENCE.

Concerning those who heard Paul's sermon at Athens, it is said: "Some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed" (Acts xvii. 32—34).

It has ever been so, and is so now. The Gospel is to some the

“savour of life unto life,” to others the “savour of death unto death.” In every congregation there are believers and unbelievers, those who receive and those who reject. The results of the Gospel are nowhere uniform. It is in this respect like the sunbeam; while it wakes the vital germ in the grain of corn, and calls into being a beautiful and manifold life, it draws poisonous vapours out of bogs and morasses; it brings life out of some objects on which it falls, and death into others. This is—

II.—A SIGNIFICANT OCCURRENCE.

It indicates several things—

First: Diversity in men's minds. If all men were alike, the same cause acting upon them would produce the same results. But they are not alike.

They are not alike *naturally*. No two have the same kind and measure of faculty. They are not alike *morally*. No two have exactly the same quality and force of disposition. They are not alike *educationally*. No two have passed through exactly the same process of education. Hence it is that no two minds can see the same things in exactly the same aspect, or feel the same things with exactly the same force. St. Paul, in giving an account of his conversion on his way to Damascus, says: “They that were with me saw the light and were afraid, but they heard not the voice of Him that spoke to me.” Here is an extraordinary circumstance which is common in life. Everywhere there are men hearing the same voice, but receiving different impressions; seeing the same lights, but observing different objects. A voice fraught with deep meaning to some, is mere empty sound to others; a light revealing the grandest realities to some, discloses nothing to others. There is everywhere through human society diverse subjectivity, where there is identical externalism. It indicates—

Secondly: The moral force of depravity. Men, through prejudices, sinful habits, and carnal tendencies, become strong enough to resist the mightiest evidence and appeals. “Ye do always resist the Spirit of God.” It indicates—

Thirdly: The uncoerciveness of the Gospel. The Gospel is the power of God; but it is not a *resistless* force. It does not outrage the natural freedom of the human soul. It reasons and persuades, but does not compel or coerce. “Will ye also go away?” &c. It indicates—

Fourthly: The need of perseverance in the preacher of the Gospel. Do not be discouraged because *some* do not believe: *others* will. “Sow your seed beside all waters, for ye know not which shall prosper, this or that.”

No. LXXXIV.

CAIAPHAS; OR, A GLANCE AT GOVERNMENT, HUMAN AND DIVINE.

(The Council of Caiaphas against Jesus. He retires from Jerusalem.—JOHN xi. 47—54.)

“Then gathered the Chief Priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles,” &c.—xi. 47—52.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 47.—*“Then gathered the Chief Priests and the Pharisees* (R. V. THE CHIEF PRIESTS THEREFORE AND THE PHARISEES GATHERED) *a council.”* “Council.” This means the court of the Sanhedrim, the chief judicatory of the nation. This court was accustomed to assemble in a hall of the temple; the full number was seventy-one, but twenty-three could transact business. *“What do we?”* What are we to do? Something must be done; things are coming to a crisis. *“For this man.”* Probably contemptuously expressed. *“Doeth many miracles”* (R. V. SIGNS). A most important concession, coming from His bitterest enemies. His miracles were undeniable facts.

Ver. 48.—*“If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him.”* Here again is an admission that His miracles had a commanding power,—power to command their faith. *“And the Romans shall* (R. V. WILL) *come and take away both our place and nation.”* “Place” may refer to the temple, their pride and their glory. They feared that Jesus would involve them in fatal hostilities with Rome.

Ver. 49.—*“And* (R. V. BUT A CERTAIN) *one of them, named Caiaphas* (R. V. OMITTS “NAMED”), *being the High Priest that same year.”* That office was an annual one; persons considered suitable were chosen every year to fill the post. *“Ye know nothing at all.”* What haughty insolence! It means this, What do you know of political expediency? I am the authority.

Ver. 50.—*“Nor consider* (R. V. DO YE TAKE ACCOUNT) *that it is expedient for us* (R. V. YOU), *that one man should die for the people.”* “As much as to say, The source of all our trouble lies in this One Person. If He were put out of the way, the nation would be

safe. What doubt, then, can there be that it is best for us to put Him to death, in order to save the people? As there was no alternative in his mind, he counsels the death of Christ on this plea.” *“That the whole nation perish not.”* His plan was, to sacrifice Christ for the good of the nation.

Vers. 51, 52.—*“And this spake he* (R. V. NOW THIS HE SAID) *not of himself: but being High Priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that* (R. V. THE) *nation,”* &c. *“Not of himself,”* &c., but by impulse from a higher power. “St. John clearly implies that the prophetic impulse was connected with the pontifical office. Whether this was a popular notion or not, is not, as some assume, the question. It is John’s idea of the fact. It was the High Priest who anciently drew responses from the Urim and the Thummim. Both Josephus and Philo are quoted by Alford as sustaining the belief that the priesthood was occasionally prophetic. The momentary gift belonged not to the impious man, but to the office. Nor did he even know the supernatural import of his own expression. The devil instigated his thoughts, but God overruled his words. ‘As Pilate (*Stier* in substance says), the representative of the secular power, testified by the superscription to Jesus as King; so Caiaphas, the head of the ecclesiastical system, symbolized Jesus as the true priest and sacrifice.’

“But is it necessary to regard the utterance as Divine? Does it mean anything more than the foresight of an able man in office? As a public man, he saw that the death of Jesus would not only tend to save the nation, but to collect the scattered Jews together, here called the ‘children of God.’”

HOMILETICS.

Our subject is *Caiaphas; or a glance at government, human and Divine*. In these words we see—

I.—AN INIQUITOUS POLICY IN THE GOVERNMENT OF MAN.

Christ had now obtained such a command over the mind of His country as to strike alarm into the hearts of the members of the Sanhedrim. Hence they met to deliberate as to what they should do. At this meeting two things were admitted—

First: The fact of His mighty deeds. "*This man doeth many miracles.*" Secondly: The fact of His power over the people. "*If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him.*" These admissions by enemies are very important as evidence, and significant as lessons. At this meeting, Caiaphas, being the High Priest that year, submitted the proposition that it was "*expedient*" that Christ should die. Now, in relation to this policy, we offer three observations—

First: That it was apparently adapted to the end. Christ was alienating the people from the institutions of the country, and shaking their faith in its authorities; and the most effective plan for terminating the mischief *seemed* to be to put Him to death. This would appear to strike the evil at the root. When this was done, public excitement would soon subside, and the feeling of the people soon flow back to its old level, and roll on monotonously in the old channel, as heretofore. It was, anyhow, plausible. Observe concerning their policy—

Secondly: That though seemingly adapted to the end, it was radically wrong in principle. What right had Caiaphas to propose the death of any man, however criminal that man may be? And even assuming his right, as a governor, to put a *criminal* to death—a prerogative, however, which we deny to all but God—certainly there was no *show* of right in proposing the death of One Who, like Christ, had never violated any law; Who had wronged no one, but blessed all. The *apparent* fitness of a measure to an end does not make it right. The only standard of right is the Will of God. Concerning their policy observe—

Thirdly: That being radically wrong, it was ultimately ruinous. Did the putting of Christ to death avert the dreaded calamity? Did it secure Judæa from the invasion of the Romans? Did it serve in any way even the temporal interests of the country? No, no; it hastened the flight of the Roman eagle; it brought on them judgments which speedily broke up their commonwealth, and beneath which the Jewish people have been groaning to this hour. Ah! what seems "*expedient*" to-day may prove in the future to have been most disastrous. Eternal principle is the

only pillar to guide short-sighted creatures in their endless path. Let governments study the policy of Caiaphas! Here is—

II.—A STUPENDOUS FACT IN THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

“It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people.” The very words in which Caiaphas propounds his own sinful policy, unconsciously predict a great fact in God’s administration—namely, that the death of Christ was necessary to the salvation of others. Wicked men often express great truths; and truth is not the less important because uttered by the lips of folly and crime. We need not cite passages in proof of the fact here predicted—namely, that the death of Christ is essential to the salvation of others. The Bible is full of it. It is the central truth of the Bible. What does the death of Christ do towards man’s salvation?

First: It does not change the mind of God in relation to man. It is sometimes represented as appeasing the anger and awakening the compassion of God. This is a fearful blasphemy. The death of Christ is not only the effect of God’s love, but the expression, proof, and medium.

Secondly: It does not relax the claims of law. There are some who represent the death of Christ as freeing man from the claims of law. This is absurd. Nothing can remove a moral being from the claims of law but annihilation.

Thirdly: It does not mitigate the enormity of sin. In truth it increases the enormity of sin in the experience of a Christian.

Fourthly: It does not change the necessary conditions of spiritual improvement. It does not make men good and great in any miraculous or mystical way. The necessary conditions of spiritual improvement for all intelligences, are the intellectual study of Divine truth, the heart application of Divine truth, and the devotional practice of Divine truth. Angels advance in this way. The death of Christ does not alter these conditions. What, then, does the death of Christ do towards our salvation? (1.) It gives a new revelation of God. What is the new revelation? His love for SINNERS. This idea you can read nowhere else. (2.) It gives new motives to obedience. “Ye are not your own: ye are bought with a price,” &c. (3.) It supplies new helps to spiritual culture. (a) It gives the highest ideal of excellence. The character of Christ reaches higher than the highest created conceptions of goodness. (β) It gives the highest incentives to excellence—gratitude, esteem, benevolence. (γ) It gives the highest minister to excellence—God’s Spirit.

No. LXXXV.

THE CROWNING CRIME OF HUMANITY, AND THE MANIFOLD ASPECTS OF WICKEDNESS.

(Jesus arrives at Bethany six days before the Passover.—JOHN xi. 55—57 ; xii. 1, 9—11.)

“Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put Him to death,” &c.—xi. 53—57.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 53.—“*Then* (R. V. SO) *from that day forth they took counsel together for to* (R. V. THAT THEY MIGHT) *put Him to death.*” “*Then,*” οὐν, after the speech of Caiaphas, which they regarded as decisive, and heartily approved. It was no longer a matter of discussion as to whether Christ should be put to death or not, that was decided. The question now was ways and means.

Ver. 54.—“*Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went* (R. V. DEPARTED) *thence into a* (R. V. INTO THE) *country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued* (R. V. TARRIED) *with His* (R. V. THE) *disciples.*” “Ephraim is sometimes spoken of in conjunction with Bethel (2 Chron. xiii. 19; Joseph. Bell. Jud. iv. 99). It lay some distance north of Jerusalem—eight miles according to Eusebius; twenty to the north-east according to Jerome. The place was, on account of its retired situation and its proximity to the desert, favourable to the design of our Lord. He might there prepare His disciples in solitude for His approaching end, and, if pursued, retire to the desert. This desert is, as Lange remarks, the northern extremity of that barren strip by which the tableland of Judah and Benjamin is separated in its whole length from the valley of the Jordan and the Dead Sea. From this locality Jesus might, at the time of the Passover, either join the pilgrims from Galilee who were going to Jerusalem by the direct route through Samaria, or go down to Jericho, in the plain of the Jordan, and put Himself in front of the caravan from Perea. We know from the Synoptists that He took the latter step. *μετά* (ver. 54) is not synonymous with *σύν*; the meaning is: He there confined Himself to the society

of His disciples; and not merely He was there with them.”—Godet.

Ver. 55.—“*And the Jews’ Passover was nigh at hand* (R. V. NOW THE PASSOVER OF THE JEWS WAS AT HAND): *and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves.*” “*The Jews’ Passover* (compare ii. 13; vi. 4) led many ἐκ τῆς χώρας (‘out of the country’)—that is, again, the open country, in contrast with the capital (Lücke, De Wette, Meyer, Godet), and especially the neighbourhood in which Jews had dwelt (Bengel, Olshausen); for it is a resumption of χώρα (ver. 54), even before the feast, to Jerusalem, in order to subject themselves to Levitical purifications on behalf of the passover (compare Exod. xix. 10; Num. ix. 10; 2 Chron. xxx. 17).”—Luthardt.

Ver. 56.—“*Then sought they* (R. V. THEY SOUGHT THEREFORE) *for Jesus, and spake among themselves* (R. V. ONE WITH ANOTHER), *as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that He will not come to the feast?*” “(ἐζητοῦν) ‘were seeking and saying.’ Many from the country, having heard of the great miracle lately wrought near Jerusalem, would expect to find Jesus there or in the neighbourhood (xii. 18). Hence, perhaps, their expression of disappointment and doubt, though the time of the feast had not arrived. (τί δοκεῖ ὑμῖν, ὅτι, &c.) ‘What think ye? (do ye think) that?’ &c.”—Webster.

Ver. 57.—“*Now both the Chief Priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where He were* (R. V. WAS), *he should show it, that they might take Him.*” The “*Chief Priests*” were the authorities from whom the command officially emanated; the evangelist adds “*the Pharisees,*” because they were its actual authors.

HOMILETICS.

Our subject here is—*The crowning crime of humanity, and the manifold aspects of wickedness.*

I.—THE CROWNING CRIME OF HUMANITY.

“Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put Him to death.” The murder of Christ stands unmatched in the world’s black catalogue of human enormities. It was the culmination of human wickedness. Three remarks are here suggested concerning it—

First: It was sanctioned by religion. Caiaphas had just pronounced in favour of it. It was a religious act. A thing is not good because it is called religious. A religious institution is often the corruptest institution; a religious man the worst. The greatest crimes ever perpetrated have been in the name and by the agency of religion. Christliness is the only true religion.

Secondly: It was pursued with deliberation. *“They took counsel together.”* When murder is perpetrated by the impulse of passion, it is an awful crime; when by cold deliberation, it is worse; when by the deliberation of one man, it is terribly hideous; but when by the deliberation of an assembly, its enormity is enhanced. *“They took counsel.”* Took counsel as to the best way of murdering the most pure, the most benevolent, the most noble Being that ever trod the earth.

Thirdly: It was delayed by Christ. *“Jesus, therefore, walked no more openly among the Jews.”* Christ knew their murderous design, and knew also that its execution was inevitable; but by withdrawing He delayed it for a few days. He withdrew, not from cowardice, not with the hope of escaping it, but to spend a few quiet hours with His disciples and His Father. Notice—

II.—THE MANIFOLD ASPECTS OF WICKEDNESS.

“The Jews’ Passover was at hand.” This shows that John was writing for Gentiles rather than Jews. The approaching festival was one at which Jesus was to be crucified. In the wickedness of the people now concerned in seeking Christ’s death we discover—

First: Wretched superstition. The object of this ritual was to prepare for the Passover. They could not partake of it if they were defiled. But here are men with murder in their hearts careful to attend to mere ceremony. With superstitious earnestness they hastened to observe a ritual, whilst their souls thirsted for the blood of innocence. Wickedness often runs into superstition. We discover—

Secondly: Profane curiosity. *“What think ye, that He will not come to the feast?”** The people began to speculate as to the pro-

* See Germ, p. 345.

bability of His coming to the feast. Some of them thought that He would come perhaps, and some that He would not appear. "It is like a sort of betting," says *Lange*, "whether He would come or not." These people seem to have no reverent thoughts on the subject; no genuine desire to see Christ. They were mere speculators. Wickedness often takes the form of speculation. We discover here—

Thirdly: Organized malice. "*Now both the Chief Priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where He were, he should show it, that they might take Him.*" A resolution had been passed by the Council, authorizing any man that should meet with Christ to take Him. They evidently expected that He would at this time be at or about the temple. It was in accordance with this order of the Sanhedrim that Christ was at length delivered up. "Judas, which betrayed Him, knew the place," &c.

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. XLIII.

FESTIVITIES.

"What think ye, that He will not come to the feast?"—xi. 56.

The feast referred to here was the feast of the Jewish Passover, one of the great religious festivals of the Hebrew people. Crowds from all parts of Judæa assembled in Jerusalem on this occasion. Christ had retired into solitude, and His enemies knew not where He was. Preparations were being made for the feast, which was to take place in six days' time, and at which Christ's enemies determined to put Him to death. Hence the question, "*What think ye, that He will not come to the feast?*" They knew not where He was. They were anxious He should be present on that occasion, that they might effect their fiendish purpose. His presence at that feast was a matter of anxious speculation with them. "*What think ye?*"

We have our festivals; and the question which these Jews asked each other, it may be well for us to ask, though in a different spirit and for a different purpose. Will Christ be at our feasts? "*What think ye?*" In answer to this question I may observe—

I.—HE WILL CERTAINLY BE AT OUR FEASTS AS A JUDICIAL SPECTATOR.

As God, He is everywhere. "He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do." The Apostle John saw Him. "His eyes were as a flame of fire." He has been present at every festive scene ever held by man, and

will be present at all our feasts. He will witness the gluttonies that degrade, and the inebrieties that paralyze the reason. The irreverent joke, the profane oath, the filthy song, and all the noisy revelries of unholy lusts will fall on His ear.

He will know the whole, see it through and through, thoroughly understand the moral character and bearing of every feast. He will "bring every work into judgment, and every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." He will "bring all the hidden things of darkness to light." "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ," &c. We need not speculate as to whether He will be at our feasts or not; we need not say to each other, "*What think ye?*" He will come; He must come. No granite walls, no doors or bolts of iron can keep Him out. He will be there. He has flaming eyes peering through all the avenues of the heart.

II.—IT IS POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO BE AT OUR FEASTS AS A LOVING FRIEND.

There is nothing on His part to prevent it. (1.) He is pre-eminently *social* in His nature. There is nothing of the insulating spirit of the recluse in Him. "The Son of man came eating and drinking." His social feelings were deep and strong. (2.) He *personally attended* feasts while on earth. He joined a bridal party at Cana of Galilee; He was present at a great feast in Levi's house; He supped with the family at Bethany; and after His resurrection He had a parting meal with His disciples on the open shores of Galilee. (3.) He has *promised to be present* in the social gatherings of His people through all future times. "If a man love Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him; and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him." "Whosoever two or three are gathered together in My name, there will I be to bless them." If He does not come to your feasts it is *your* fault: it is because you do not wish Him. Your idea of a feast does not agree with His, and you wish your idea to be carried out. You are afraid that His presence will have too sobering and chastening an influence upon the party. You wish the utmost license in the frolic of the hour. Do you ask, "*Will He come to our feast?*" I ask, "Have you *invited* Him?" All the other guests are invited, but is He? He waits for the invitation only. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock."

III.—IF HE DOES NOT COME AS A LOVING FRIEND, WE HAD BETTER NOT HAVE THE FEASTS AT ALL.

(1.) If He is absent it would be an affair unworthy of our natures. Eating and drinking, talking nonsense and scandal, discoursing upon the paltry questions of time, and tickling each others risi-

bilities, are unworthy the dignity of human nature. (2.) If He is absent, it will be an affair pernicious to us. The devil is sure to be there as the presiding genius; he will supply the excitations to weaken and degrade our higher nature, and to strengthen the lower. The Christless feast is a miserable affair when it is over, in its effects upon character, and in its hideous aspects in the reminiscences of conscience. Infinitely better a "feast of herbs" with Christ, than the banquet of kings without Him.

Friends, invite Christ to your festivities; His presence will chasten and hallow the scene, unseal the deepest fountains of your social nature, and bring the souls of your guests together in the closest relations, and sanctify and immortalize the friendships of the joyous hour.

No. LXXXVI.

THE TRUE CHURCH.

(*The Rulers conspire. The Supper at Bethany. Treachery of Judas.*—MATT. xxvi. 1—16; MARK xiv. 1—11; LUKE xxii. 1—6; JOHN xii. 2—8.)

"Then Jesus six days before the Passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom He raised from the dead," &c.—xii. 1—11.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 1.—"*Then Jesus* (R. V. JESUS THEREFORE) *six days before the Passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom He raised from the dead*" (R. V. WHOM JESUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD). "*Then,*" after leaving Ephraim. (See xi. 54.) He went from Ephraim, on the borderland between Samaria and Galilee, to join the caravans going down by the Jordan, through Jericho, to the Passover at Jerusalem. "*Six days before the Passover.*" A short period of time, but embracing wonderful events, discourses, and deeds. It was the Passion Week. All the events recorded from this chapter on to the 19th, occurred during the six days preceding our Lord's death.

Ver. 2.—"*There* (R. V. SO) *they made Him a supper* (R. V. THERE); *and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table* (R. V. MEAT) *with Him.*" We are not told who made the supper. This supper at Bethany was, according to the best computation, on the first day of the week. The crucifixion occurred on the following Friday.

Ver. 3.—"*Then took Mary* (R. V.

MARY THEREFORE TOOK) *a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly* (R. V. PRECIOUS), *and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.*" "Matthew and Mark tell us that, being in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at meat, He was anointed by a woman, not mentioning her name. John, however, tells us it was Mary. Lazarus sits as the guest, Martha serves at table, Mary performs the ceremony, and glorifies the feast by the anointing. After the anointing, Matthew says, an 'alabaster box of very precious ointment,' and Mark gives the same account. That this is not the same anointing as recorded by Luke (vii. 38), is generally agreed, as that was in a different place, probably Capernaum; and the whole record is different, the occasion and purpose of the anointing being different. The woman in that case also is represented as a notable 'sinner,' and 'a woman of the city.' It was such a transaction as could easily have occurred more than once." "*The feet.*" Matthew says she poured it on His head, so also Mark. John records the additional

fact that she anointed His feet, because it was the greatest proof of love and reverence.

Ver. 4.—“*Then saith one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray Him*” (R. V. BUT JUDAS ISCARIOT, ONE OF HIS DISCIPLES, WHICH SHOULD BETRAY HIM, SAITH). John is the only one of the evangelists who names Judas as the objector. “*Which should betray Him.*” This is mentioned here because the feeling that he displayed was worthy of the traitor.

Ver. 5.—“*Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?*” About eight pounds of our money.

Ver. 6.—“*This* (R. V. NOW THIS) *he said, not that* (R. V. BECAUSE) *he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had* (R. V. HAVING) *the bag, and bare* (R. V. TOOK AWAY) *what was put therein.*” “The same love of money which disposed Judas to be the treasurer of the little fraternity, led him, by its unchecked indulgence, to petty frauds in his office, and finally to the awful step of selling his Master for a paltry sum of silver.”—*Livermore.*

Ver. 7.—“*Then said Jesus, Let her alone* (R. V. JESUS THEREFORE SAID, SUFFER HER TO KEEP IT): *against the day of My burying hath she kept this.*” Christ defends the pious act.

He knew her spirit, and appreciated it. He would not suffer a spontaneous act of generosity and reverence to be blamed.

Ver. 8.—“*For the poor always ye have* (R. V. YE HAVE ALWAYS) *with you; but Me ye have not always.*” He would not have the poor unremembered; but opportunities for serving them were always at hand, while the opportunity for honouring Him was departing. He was impressed with a view of His impending doom.

Ver. 9.—“*Much people* (R. V. THE COMMON PEOPLE THEREFORE) *of the Jews therefore knew* (R. V. LEARNED) *that He was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom He had raised from the dead.*” No wonder people crowded to that spot. At that feast there was not only a man who had been in his grave, but the Mighty Man Who had raised him from the tomb.

Vers. 10, 11.—“*But the Chief Priests consulted* (R. V. TOOK COUNSEL) *that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.*” The hostility of these priests knew no bounds. They sought to destroy not only the Agent, but the subject of the miracle, and this, no doubt, to blot both from the memory of the living.

HOMILETICS.

Here is a wonderful social scene, which we shall employ to illustrate *The true Church*. Viewing it in this light, two things are notable—its internal aspect and its external influence.

I.—ITS INTERNAL ASPECT.

Looking into this feast in the house at Bethany, we observe—

First: Christ as the central figure. “*They made Him a supper.*” Whilst Lazarus would of course attract considerable notice, Christ was the Object on Whom all eyes were specially fixed, and in Whom all special interest centred. In the *true Church*, Christ is the central figure: in all things He has the “pre-eminence.” He is in the “*midst.*” Again, we observe—

Secondly: A variety of guests. Lazarus was there, who had undergone a wonderful experience. Naturally he seems to have been

a reticent man. It is wonderful that no word of his is recorded, especially on such an occasion. Martha is there, busy in waiting, and perhaps anxious to serve as ever. Mary is there, thoughtful, tender, overflowing with devotional sentiment. Judas is there, covering his avaricious heart with the mantle of philanthropy. Simon the leper is there. It was in his house, Matthew informs us, that the feast was held. Probably Christ had healed him of his disease, and he was bounding with gratitude. No doubt others were there whose names are not recorded. The true Church embraces all *varieties* of character, the male and the female, the intellectual and the emotional. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." We observe—

Thirdly : The presence of an incongruous character. Judas is there. He sits at the banquet, he participates in the viands ; perhaps he joins in the festive talk. But he is utterly destitute of any sympathy with the genius of the scene. He soon reveals his utter incongruity of spirit ; for when Mary, in the affluence of her love, broke the precious box of ointment, and "*anointed the feet of Jesus,*" he exclaimed with a greedy snarl, "*Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor ?*" Not that he cared for the poor ; the Evangelist says, "*he was a thief, and had the bag.*" This man shows three base things. (1.) A false estimate of property. Why was this waste ? Worldly men will of course agree with the idea of Judas, that money laid out in the cherishing of mere devotional feeling is waste. But what is wasted money ? The money that is laid out in magnificent houses, gorgeous apparel, and sumptuous fare, or that which is laid out in the cultivation and development of all the *moral sentiments* of the soul ? Assuming that man is an accountable and undying spirit, the waste is in the former case. He shows—(2.) A hypocritical philanthropy. Did Judas care for the poor ? Not he ; so the Evangelist states, so his history shows. (3.) A heartless intrusion. What right had he to make the remark, to interfere with the outflowing of this woman's love ? Hence Christ says, "*Let her alone.*" Why trouble ye her ? No man has a right to trouble another on account of his religious services. In the *true* Church on earth such an incongruous character is not, alas ! uncommon. Indeed, his characteristic selfishness under the garb of benevolence, and his selling truth and principle for money, are too prevalent in every Christian assembly. I fear there is no power either in Church or State more prevalent than this Iscariotism. We observe—

Fourthly : The display of genuine devotion. This we discover in Mary, in her anointing of Christ and wiping His feet with her hair. Her devotion was (1.) *Generous*. The ointment was costly. (2.) *Spontaneous*. It was unsought. (3.) *Open*. It was done in the

presence of all the guests. (4.) *Right*. It comes out in the narrative as sweetly natural. This woman was doing the right thing. It was right in *principle*. She wrought a good work. It was right in *extent*. She did what she could. It was right in *reason*. "*Against the day of My burying.*" * So far, then, this social scene represents the true Church. Regarding it as a portrait of the true Church, another thing noticeable is—

II.—ITS EXTERNAL INFLUENCE.

This banquet at Bethany acted powerfully upon the classes outside. Its influence could not be confined to the limits of the banquet house. It broke forth, touched and roused into excitement populations around.

First: Some were attracted by curiosity. "*Much people of the Jews therefore knew that He was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom He had raised from the dead.*" They had undoubtedly a strong desire to see the man who was raised from the dead; as well, no doubt, as to see Him Who had wrought the miracle, Whose name perhaps was on the tongue of all, and Whose wondrous life they probably regarded as drawing rapidly to a close. The true Church has never failed to excite the curiosity of those outside of it. The wonderful facts on which its theology is founded, as well as the moral revolutions which it is constantly effecting, have a natural tendency to rouse the inquisitiveness of outsiders. Hence the questions that are started, the criticisms that are instituted, and the discussions that constantly occur in social circles, in public halls, and in the current literature of the day.

Secondly: Some were attracted by malice. "*But the Chief Priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.*" As the popularity of Christ advanced, the spirit of religious intolerance and animosity gained power. It had become so irrepressible that it resolved not merely to murder Christ, but to murder Lazarus as well. We can understand why they hated Christ and determined to put Him out of existence; but why should they hate Lazarus? There was no proof that Lazarus had ever come into collision with them, had ever struck against their prejudices, or denounced their spirit. He seems to have been always a reticent, inoffensive man. They hated him because of his connection with Christ. He was now a mighty, living witness of Christ's power and Divinity, and attracted general notice. Their determination—(1.) Was very *wicked*. Whilst Christ had never done them an injury, but had proved Himself the Great Friend of their race, Lazarus had in no way injured them. How daring the

* See "Genius of the Gospel" on Matthew, *in loco*.

impiety, not only to strike a blow at the Great Miracle-Worker Who had proved Himself Divine, but upon one who had been in the grave, and who, if struck down, might rise again. Their determination—(2.) Was *foolish*. Why did they determine to destroy these two? In order to prevent the spread of Christ's doctrines and spirit. But how absurd! Truth cannot be struck down by physical force. Might cannot manacle thought. As soon employ argument to arrest the progress of the incoming tide as to employ mere force to check the march of truth. The true Church has always attracted men by malice as well as curiosity. Multitudes have pursued it with a malignant spirit. Never perhaps were its enemies more numerous, more determined, and more crafty than now.

CONCLUSION. Are we in the true Church? If so, are we true men in the true Church? or, like Judas, false?

No. LXXXVII.

THREE CLASSES IN RELATION TO CHRIST.

(Our Lord's public entry into Jerusalem.—MATT. xxi. 1—11, 14—17; MARK xi. 1—11; LUKE xix. 29—44; JOHN xii. 12—19.)

"On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem," &c.—xii. 12—19.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 12.—*"On the next day much people"* (R. V. ON THE MORROW A GREAT MULTITUDE) *that were* (R. V. HAD) *come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem.*" The festal party broken up, the banquet over, the next day Jesus proceeds to enter Jerusalem for the last time. The Synoptic Gospels give a fuller account of this wonderful event. The "*next day*" means the "first day" in the week, the day we call Sunday. There is a little diversity in the accounts given by the Synoptists and that given by John. "John mentions that part of the palm-procession which issues from Jerusalem, while the Synoptists give prominence to the portion accompanying Jesus, *i. e.* the Galilaean. Since the same story is here told us by the Synoptists and by John, it becomes very evident that it was John's intention to supplement their accounts. However, the Synoptists themselves distinguish between a part of the procession that preceded Jesus, and a part

that followed Him. By the former attendants, those seem to be meant who set out from Jerusalem, intending to bring Jesus into the city. John, on the other hand, likewise discriminates between two divisions (vers. 17 and 18)—citizens of Jerusalem and festal pilgrims who are already at Jerusalem."—*Dr. Lange*. "*Much people that were come to the feast,*"—great multitudes; the Feast of the Pass-over was one of the grand national festivals.

Ver. 13.—"*Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet Him.*" "The meaning of palm-branches we learn from Lev. xxiii. 40. There the children of Israel were commanded, in the Feast of the Tabernacles, to take green branches of *palm*s and the boughs of thick trees; and they were to rejoice before the Lord seven days. The present festal rite was therefore an expression of joy, the object of which was the coming of the so long expected King."—*Hengstenberg*. As this entrance to Jerusalem occurred

soul does not care for the robe or the crown. To me it argues terribly ill in this age, that England's Prime Minister should have such low ideas of the true dignity of men as to offer high-sounding titles to them, and that there should be found in a realm calling itself Christian, bipeds destitute of sufficient manhood to resist with scorn the offer of such tawdry distinctions. Human butchers, brewers, technical lawyers, millionnaires, and such, are entitled Sirs, and Lords, Honourables, &c. Bah!

“Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
 'Tis only noble to be good,
 Kind hearts are more than coronets,
 And simple faith than noble blood.”

Secondly: An eternal idea developed in an apparently incidental appearance. It seemed perfectly casual that Christ should have required a creature to ride upon, and that there should be such a creature at hand; but all this, some have said, was but the carrying out of what seemed a very old idea; an eternal plan that an old writer indicated some six hundred years before. “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!” Caprice and impulse had no part in the control of Christ's life. The life of virtue is never that of impulse or accident, it is always the unfoldment of an eternal idea.* We have here *Three classes in relation to Christ*—the *populace*, the *disciples*, the *Pharisees*.

I.—THE POPULACE.

“On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,” &c. Who these people were, we are not told. Some, no doubt, who had heard Christ preach in some parts of the country. All had heard of Him. Amongst all there had arisen a strong desire to see Him on this occasion. Many perhaps were of those who asked the question a day or two before, “What think ye, that He will not come to the feast.” (chap. xi. 56)? Having heard that Christ was coming to the feast, they hurried out with rapturous hearts to meet Him. These may be regarded as a type of the unsophisticated masses of mankind. Those who are unbiassed by religious prejudices both doctrinal and ecclesiastic. These men—

First: Saw Divine royalty under the garb of secular meanness. In the poor Man pursuing His journey on an “*ass*,” they desecrated a moral majesty before which their spirits bowed. Men in our age and land are so blinded by worldly pride and religious prejudice, that they can discover no moral greatness under the tattered garb of poverty. But an unsophisticated soul can with the eye of conscience peer through all forms into the realm of moral realities. These men—

* See “Genius of the Gospel” on Matthew, p. 401.

Secondly: Became enraptured with the morally great for its own sake. "*Took branches of palm trees.*" Conscience, which is in truth the core of human nature, the inner man, is bound by the law of its constitution to exult in the morally right and the morally great. "I delight in the law of God after the inner man." Conscience feels bound to admire and adore the right, and to shout "*Hosanna!*" whenever it appears. These men—

Thirdly: Felt the reality of Christ's miracle. "*For this cause the people also met Him, for that they heard that He had done this miracle.*" The sophisticated and prejudiced tried to argue the miracle away, and refused to believe it. But the fact to these people was clear. They were "with Him when He called Lazarus out of his grave." They had no interest to serve in denying it.

Thus the "*people*" went with Christ, and followed and honoured Him when He appeared. And this, methinks, the people will always do, if Christ is presented to them as He really is, not as metamorphosed by Churches and creeds, but as He appears in the pages of His inspired biographers.

Another class which we have in relation to Christ is—

II.—THE DISCIPLES.

"*These things understood not His disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things unto Him.*" Two things are suggested concerning these disciples—

First: They were partially informed. They were at this time utterly ignorant of what Zechariah (ix. 9) is supposed to have uttered in relation to Christ. Though they had been with Christ for nearly three years and heard Him expound their Scriptures, they were yet very ignorant. Even His disciples, the most enlightened of them, were greatly in the dark, and knew but little of their Sacred Books. "The Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from His word."

Secondly: They were enlightened by history. "*When Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of Him.*" After He had ascended to Heaven and the Spirit came down, a new light dawned on them. The facts of His life were brought up vividly to their minds, and these facts they compared with their old Scriptures, and they saw in them, as they thought, the fulfilment of ancient predictions. History—not Churches, not even Biblical critics—is the best interpreter of prophecy. Let us study prophecy and the old Hebrew Scriptures in the light of Christ's biography, not His life in their hazy atmosphere.

Another class which we have in relation to Christ is—

III.—THE PHARISEES.

"*The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after Him.*" These men were the most powerful of the nation, and from the first they set their hearts against Christ, and had lately planned His destruction. His growing popularity heightened their indignation and increased their alarm. They now met in council, and the pressing burden of their business is the advancing influence of Christ. "*They said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing?*" The language is peevish and fretful in the extreme. It would seem as if one was criminating the other. "*Ye prevail nothing.*" Your efforts have been planned, bold, and determined, but to no avail. "*Behold, the world is gone after Him.*" Here is a testimony to the tremendous power which Christ had obtained during His three years' ministry. These men were—

(1.) Bound to acknowledge the failure of all their efforts. "*Ye prevail nothing.*" All the antagonists of Christianity will have to acknowledge this sooner or later. (2.) Bound to acknowledge a most disagreeable fact. "*The world is gone after Him.*"

CONCLUSION. The subject suggests—

First: The moral obstruction to the spread of Gospel truth. What is that? The religious sophistication of the masses of the people. Religious hierarchies and sects have made them the victims of religious conventionalities. All these things are to be swept away from their horizon before they will see the moral glory of Christ. The subject suggests—

Secondly: The work of the true preacher. Present Christ to men as He appears in the Gospel. Do not dress Him up in your tawdry robes of ritualism or rhetoric. He is mighty in His humility, majestic in His worldly degradation. The subject suggests—

Thirdly: The folly of the truth opposer. "*Ye prevail nothing.*" Every blow put forth to crush the truth will not only rebound upon the head of its author, but give a new impetus to quicken its speed.

No. LXXXVIII.

THE MORAL CRAVING, THE GRANDEST WORK, AND THE
SUBLIMEST TYPE OF HUMANITY.

(*Certain Greeks desire to see Jesus.*—JOHN xii. 20—36.)

"And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast," &c.—xii. 20—23.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 20.—
"And (R. V. NOW) there were certain
Greeks among them (R. V. THOSE) that
came (R. V. WENT) up to worship at the

feast." "Among all the facts which
took place between the solemn entry
and the Thursday evening before our
Lord's death, St. John has preserved

but one, omitted by the Synoptists—viz. the attempt of certain Greek proselytes to approach Him, and the discourse in which He expressed the feelings to which this unexpected circumstance gave rise.”—*Dr. Godet*. “*Certain Greeks*.” Were these Jews dwelling in foreign parts, or Gentiles who were proselytes to Judaism, or Gentile idolaters? No one can determine with certainty. *Milman* regards the term as comprehending all who were not of Jewish descent. Perhaps they were Gentile converts, technically called “proselytes at the gate.”

Ver. 21.—“*The same came therefore (R. V. THESE THEREFORE CAME) to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired (R. V. ASKED) him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.*” “If they were from Galilee, which was partly inhabited by Gentiles, we might imagine them to have been previously acquainted with Philip; yet (Grecianized) Syrians inhabited the country from Lebanon to Lake Tiberias (*Josephus, De Bello Jud.* iii. 4, 5); Perea had Greek cities (*Joseph., Antiq.* xvi. 11. 4). Philip’s consultation with Andrew must be attributed to the unusualness of seeing the Master hold intercourse with Gentiles (*Matt.* x. 5); for the uncircumcised proselytes of the gate were still so considered (*Acts.* x.).”—*Tholuck*. It is worthy of note that the two disciples now appealed to by

these Greeks are the two disciples alone whose names are of Greek origin.

Ver. 22.—“*Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip (R. V. ANDREW COMETH AND PHILIP, AND THEY) tell Jesus.*” Here we see the cautious character of Philip, who would not take on himself the responsibility of acceding to the request without consulting his brother Andrew. We find these two disciples together on other occasions, chap. i. and iv.

Ver. 23.—“*And Jesus answered (R. V. ANSWERETH) them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.*” “It is not said whether the Greeks were admitted to converse with Jesus; but it seems probable that these words were spoken to Philip and Andrew in reply, and in the hearing of the strangers and of the disciples. It may have been, indeed, after receiving Greeks and conversing with them, that this discourse was delivered. His answer was suggested by the appearing of these Gentiles. He is led to look upon these heathen hungering after salvation, as the first-fruits of that abundant harvest which His death would produce.”—*Tholuck*. “*The hour is come*”—the eternally predestined period. Heaven has a set time for all things. “*The Son of man should be glorified.*” Chap. xvii. 5 is a commentary on these words.

HOMILETICS.

There are three things here worthy of our notice, in relation to *Humanity*. Here is—

I.—THE MORAL CRAVING OF HUMANITY.

“*And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: the same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.*” These Greeks were not Jews speaking Greek, but Gentiles and Greeks by race. Whatever their station in life or philosophic opinions, they seemed to be amongst those free men in religion who are ready to render homage to the institutions of the place. They were at Jerusalem, and desired to fall in with the religion of Jerusalem. They “*came up to worship at the feast.*” It is manifest that they felt a deep religious want, a restless craving of nature. They wanted something more than their philosophies could supply,

more even than Jewish ritualism could supply ; for after the feast they came to Philip and said, “ *We would see Jesus.*” They wanted—(1.) Some one who could *solve their moral problems.* (2.) Some one on whom to *centre their supreme love.* (3.) Some one to *correct the moral evils of which they were conscious.* (4.) Some one to *guide them rightly on the way of life.* In all hearts, the world over, there is a craving for such an one, and such an One is Jesus, and He only. He is man’s true Christ.

We have here—

II.—THE GRANDEST WORK OF HUMANITY.

In that work we see Philip and Andrew engaged. “ *Philip cometh and telleth Andrew, and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.*” To bring men to Christ is something more than to bring them to science and art. Though this ministry we disparage not, we highly prize it. Something more than bringing them to a Church or a sect. Numbers are actually engaged in this work ; their inspiration is sectarianism, and their efforts are often immoral and pernicious. To bring men to Christ is to bring them—(1.) *To the Only infallible Physician.* (2.) *To the Only efficient Educator.* (3.) *To the Only qualified Redeemer.* No work on this earth is so important, so beneficent, so sublime as this. But to bring to Christ, you must be *Christlike.* You may bring crowds to your Church by clap-trap. You can only bring them to Christ by a life of Christly stateliness, inspiration, and influence.

We have here—

III.—THE SUBLIMEST TYPE OF HUMANITY.

“ *And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.*” “ *The Son of man,*” not the mere son of a Jew or Gentile, not the son of a nation, a Church, or a sect ; but the “ *Son of man,*”—sustaining the same relations to all, having the same love for all—the *Model Man.*

First : He speaks with magnanimity, in prospect of His death. Gethsemane and Calvary were before Him. And yet with what sublime composure He fronts them !

Secondly : He speaks with triumph in prospect of His glory. “ *The Son of man should be glorified*”—glorified in His resurrection from the dead, His exaltation to heaven, His moral victories over all the errors, the curses, and miseries of the world.

No. LXXXIX.

THE GRAIN OF WHEAT.—CHRISTLINESS.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone,” &c.—xii. 24—26.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 24.—“*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn* (R. V. GRAIN) *of wheat fall into the ground* (R. V. EARTH) *and die, it abideth* (R. V. BY ITSELF) *alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth* (R. V. BEARETH) *much fruit.*” As it is necessary that a seed should be buried in the bosom of the earth, and to all human appearance die, in order that it may become a fruitful plant, and multiply itself a hundred-fold, so was it essential that Jesus should die, that His religion might triumph, and its saving influences be disseminated far and wide to bless mankind, that—

“Millions of souls might feel its power,

And bear it down to millions more.”

“*It abideth alone.*” It remaineth a single grain, without increase.

Ver. 25.—“*He that loveth his life shall lose* (R. V. LOSETH) *it; and he*

that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.” “The egotism that clings to the outward life of appearance, and lives for that, loses its true life, which is conditional on surrender to God; the spirit of sacrifice, which does not cleave to its life of self, nay, which hates it in its old form in this old world—*i. e.* joyfully sacrifices it, the sooner the better, and even hates it, if it be about to become a hindrance—regains it unto a higher, eternal life.”—*Lange.*

Ver. 26.—“*If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My* (R. V. THE) *Father honour.*” The way to serve Christ, is to follow Him; and following Him will secure His eternal fellowship and the honour of His Father. “If we suffer with Him we shall reign with Him.”

HOMILETICS.

These verses may be fairly regarded as representing what genuine religion really is. It is not a theory, however Scriptural; not a ritual, however beautiful; not a passing sentiment, however powerful and devout; not an outward service, however consistent with prescriptive law, but *Christliness*. The most un-Christly things in literature, institutions, and men I know, are those labelled Christian. Christliness stands in these days in startling contrast to the Christian. But what is *Christliness*? The words suggest three things concerning it—it is the death of selfishness—the following of Christ—the guarantee of blessedness.

I.—IT IS THE DEATH OF SELFISHNESS.

His self-sacrifice is here represented in a symbol and in a statement.

First: In a symbol. “*A corn of wheat.*” The fact in nature to which Christ refers is patent to all, and practically recognized in all labours of the agriculturist. It is this—that the grain, in order to multiply itself, must go down into the earth, and its wrappage or husk die. This fact might be taken as a symbol of several things.

1. As a symbol of the history of Jesus Christ. For His doctrines to obtain wide, regal influence over the minds of men, His death seemed necessary; that event struck home in thunder His truths to the understanding and conscience. Christ means to say, that His death was as necessary to the extension of His truths in the world, as the death of the seed to the multiplication of its kind; and it was verily so. "Ought not Christ to have suffered?" The fact may be taken—

2. As a symbol of the history of moral truth. A great truth, to grow and multiply, must go deep into the soil of the soul, and there its logical *husks* and *wrappings* must die and rot; and then by quiet reflection it shall germinate and grow.

3. As a symbol of the history of a true soul. The fact admirably illustrates this. (1.) It is simple in its appearance. How plain and unattractive is the grain of corn! How unostentatious is a true soul! it makes itself of "no reputation." (2.) It is unbounded in possibilities. What possibilities does a single grain possess! Harvests slumber in one seed; forests repose in one shell! What wondrous potentialities lie within the human soul! (3.) It is developed by self-abnegation. Unless the soul dies to self, loses all its egotism, becomes self-oblivious, it will never rise into freedom, power, and perfection.

But it is as the symbol of the first, namely, Christ's self-sacrifice, it is here employed. It was not necessary that He should merely die in order that His beneficent influence might spread, and His disciples multiply through the earth, but that He should die the death of *self-sacrifice*. If He had died by accident, or disease, or force, its moral influence would be worthless. He gave Himself, He laid down His life. His self-sacrifice is here represented—

Secondly: In a statement. "*He that loveth his life shall lose it.*" A strong way, this, of saying, he that loveth his own interests as the primary end of life will be ruined, whereas he that hateth—that is, in a comparative sense—his mere personal interests, will secure his everlasting well-being. "The term," says *Dr. Godet*, "*μισεῖν, to hate*, here includes the idea of a generous contempt, and well characterizes the noble ambition which aims higher than this world." The self-seeking spirit is moral ruin, the self-sacrificing spirit is moral salvation. The reigning spirit of Christ was that of self-sacrificing love. "If any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

The words suggest concerning Christliness that—

II.—IT IS THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST.

"*If any man serve Me, let him follow Me,*" or, as some render it, "If any one minister to Me, let him follow Me;" that is, let him become self-sacrificing as I am; let him die to all selfish and

personal considerations as I have. You cannot follow Christ in the vastness of His intelligence, in the might of His arm, in the force and extent of His authority; but you can in His master aims and motives. His aim is the universal reign of holiness, the happiness of humanity, the good of the universe, and the glory of the Father. All should aim at this, and all should work for this, animated by disinterested affection. Without this love, this charity, we are "nothing." (See 1 Cor. xiii.)

The words suggest concerning Christliness that—

III.—IT IS THE GUARANTEE OF BLESSEDNESS.

"Where I am, there shall also My servant be. If any man serve Me, let him follow Me," &c. What does it involve?

First: Fellowship with Christ. "*Where I am.*" To be with Christ is heaven. What will it be to dwell with Christ for ever? It involves—

Secondly: The highest dignity. "*Him will My Father honour.*" What is it to be honoured by the Infinite Father? Eternity alone can reveal.

CONCLUSION.—Here then is genuine religion. It is Christliness, nothing else. We must die to live, as a grain of wheat—die to self and to all worldly ambitions, and live the life that Christ lived, that of supreme love to God and self-sacrificing love for man.

No. XC.

A TWO-FOLD CRISIS.

"Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour," &c.—xii. 27—31.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 27.—"*Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say?*" To whom does He speak? *Himself*. It is profound self-consultation. "*Father, save me from this hour.*" "He seemed to have had," says Meyer, "a momentary abhorrence of the pains of death, induced by weakness." He seemed to have had the same feeling as in Gethsemane, when He exclaimed, "Father, if possible, let this cup pass from Me." "*But for this cause came I unto this hour.*" His sensitive nature cried for exemption, but His higher spirit realized the greatness and necessity of His mission. "The soul, *ψυχή*, is the seat of the natural, as *spirit*, the *πνεῦμα*, is that of the religious emotions. Jesus here used the first of these terms, because

it was the prospect of His personal sorrows which at this moment moved Him. The perfect, *τεράκται*, is troubled, indicated the condition into which the Lord found Himself plunged. This inward trouble revealed itself to Him especially by the unusual hesitation which He experienced when about to pour out His feelings in prayer."—*Goidet*.

Ver. 28.—"*Father, glorify Thy Name.*" He rises now as a conqueror of His temporary weakness. He loses all the horrors of His death in His lofty aspirations for His Father's glory. "*Then came there (R. V. THEREFORE) a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.*" Each time that the Son performed a great act of personal consecration, the

Father answered by a sensible manifestation of approval. Thus, at the baptism and the transfiguration. What was the voice? It was Divine. It came from heaven. It communicated glorious encouragement; "I am glorified, and will glorify again." It is not only audible, but loud.

Ver. 29.—"*The people* (R. V. MULTITUDE) *therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered* (R. V. HAD THUNDERED): *others said, An angel spake* (R. V. HATH SPOKEN) *to Him.*" It was not mere sound, though it was articulate thunder. Voices from heaven are frequently noticed in the Bible (1 Kings xix. 11, 12; Dan. iv. 31; Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5; Acts ix. 7; x. 13; Rev. i. 10; iv. 5). The hearers formed different conceptions of the voice; some regarded it as mere thunder, others as the utterance of an angel.

Ver. 30.—"*Jesus answered and said,*

This voice came not (R. V. HATH NOT COME) *because of Me* (R. V. FOR MY SAKE), *but for your sakes.*" Christ did not require the thundering sound in order to assure Him of the answer. He had it in His own soul. But those about Him required that He should come in thunder.

Ver. 31.—"*Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*" "As to the world, this hour was one of deepest revolution. It was the signal, first, of its judgment (ver. 31); then of the expulsion of its ancient master (ver. 31); and lastly, of the accession of its new Sovereign (ver. 32). The word *νῦν*, *now*, at the beginning of the first two propositions, expressly brings out the decisive nature of the present moment with respect to the human race." Satan's empire over the world is shattered with the death and resurrection of Jesus.

HOMILETICS.

All things have their crises, some periods which determine a new course in their history. *Inanimate nature* has its crises. It has periods when it seems to oscillate between opposite points. There are times when the subterranean fires seem to hesitate as to whether they shall burst into fury, cleave the mountains, or decline—times when the storms of heaven reach a point, and they either rise to greater fury or die away. The various strata of the earth indicate the critical periods to which material nature has ever been exposed. All *life* has its crises. Every living creature has its critical periods. Indeed our life is but a perpetual oscillation between health and sickness, life and death. *Human history* has its crises. In the life of the individual man they are found. "There is a tide in the affairs of men." There are moral moods on which the destiny of some depend. In the investigations of science, in the progress of empires, and in the march of commerce, critical times are manifest. This passage leads us to consider *a twofold crisis*—a crisis in the history of the Son of God and a crisis in the history of our fallen world.

I.—A CRISIS IN THE HISTORY OF THE SON OF GOD.

"*Now is My soul troubled,*" &c. Our Lord seemed to hesitate now as to whether He should advance or recede. Four facts are here suggested in relation to this crisis.

First: This crisis was caused by mental suffering. As yet there

were no wounds inflicted in His body, the hand of violence had not touched His physical frame. Bodily sufferings are not to be compared to mental. Whatever Christ's mental sufferings were, they had not in them the elements of remorse, malignity, or despair. His sufferings were—(1.) Those of a holy and exquisitely susceptible nature in the presence of a world of sin. In proportion to the purity of a mind will be the poignancy of the pain which the view of sin inflicts. Paul's soul was "stirred" within him, &c. (2.) Those of an exquisitely tender and benevolent nature in view of misery. This Christ manifested when He wept over Jerusalem. Christ saw the world as no other Being ever saw it. (3.) Those of a merciful Saviour endured on behalf of humanity. Suppose the whole history of *one* sin made known to a holy soul—its rise, progress, and bearings upon the universe, as well as upon the individual—the tremendous woes and miseries it would produce—what agony it would strike into that heart! But Christ saw the agonies which would spring from *every* sin of *every* man. These sufferings brought Christ's soul to a crisis—and what a crisis!

Another fact suggested is—

Secondly: This crisis proved the strength of His love for humanity. It is only for a moment that His love for the race seemed to give way. "*What shall I say?*" How long did He hesitate? With the very next pulsation of the heart He said, "*Father, glorify Thy Name.*" Not, Father, deliver Me from this woe, take away My sufferings; but, "Thy will be done."

Thirdly: This crisis displayed the efficacy of prayer. It was by prayer He came off victorious. Oh, how He prayed! (Luke xxii.)

Fourthly: This crisis explains His history. "*But for your sakes.*" He endured His sufferings, not for His own sake, but for the sake of man.

Here is—

II.—A CRISIS IN THE HISTORY OF OUR FALLEN WORLD.

"*Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*" Christ knew the power of the devil to be that of a prince. To Him he appeared a being of tremendous power. Before his fall he was great. He was created pure, for benevolence never created an unholy thing. In heaven he commenced his career. He learnt his lessons in the smiles of infinite love and light.

"High in the midst of all the throng
Satan a tall archangel sat."

But his fall does not seem to have deprived him of his natural power. The loss of his innocence left him a mental Hercules in the universe, a gigantic prince. But how does the death of Christ cast him out?

First: It gives a new force to Redemptive Truth. Satan rules by error. Error in relation to religion, error in relation to happiness, error in relation to glory. Remove these errors, and you break his power. His empire is founded on falsehood. Error cannot stand before truth. Christ embodied truth in a holy life and a noble death.

Secondly: It gives a wider theatre to Redemptive Truth. Moral truth, under the Law, was limited in its range. Christ universalized it, sent it through the world. Moral truth, under the Law, was only as a dim lamp hung up in the heavens of the Israelitish people. In the Gospel it broke forth as a sun in the heavens of humanity.

Thirdly: It gives a mightier advocacy of Redemptive Truth. Every genuine believer in Christ becomes a propagandist.

CONCLUSION.—Brothers, ponder this crisis. Whereunto shall I liken Christ's position? I think of the *Physician*, when the disease of his patient has reached a crisis, and when he feels that his next prescription will determine the fate of one who is the father of a large family, or the ruler of a great people. I think of the *Pilot* who, under the starless vault of heaven, and amid the fury of the hurricane, with the foaming billows dashing against his vessel, feels, that on his next direction the fate of all on board depends. I think of the *General* who, after many encounters with his foe, is determined to make another and a last; who feels, that on the calculations of that hour the fate of armies and the existence of empires are suspended. But such crises are but as faint shadows to this! "*What shall I say?*" It would seem as if there were an inclination to retreat; but if He had retreated? His pledges would have been broken, all the hopes of the world would have gone out.

No. XCI.

THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die," &c.—xii. 32—37.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 32.—"*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth.*" *Kâyô*, "*and I.*" The *I* is emphatic, and stands in contrast with the ejected prince, referred to in the preceding verse. The lifting up does not point, as some suppose, to His ascension to Heaven, but to His crucifixion upon the cross. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness." The "*if*" (*ἐὰν ἴψ.*), the conditional particle, does not indicate the

doubtfulness of the event expressed by *ἰψωθῶ*, but the certainty of the event represented as contingent upon it. "*Draw all men unto Me*" (R. v. MYSELF). "We suppose," says *Lange*, "this to be indicative of the totality of the nations, in antithesis to the firstlings of the Greeks who have here inquired after Him."

Ver. 33.—"*This*" (R. v. BUT THIS) *He said, signifying what death He should die*" (R. v. BY WHAT MANNER

OF DEATH HE SHOULD DIE). (See chap. xviii. 32.)

Ver. 34.—“*The people* (R. V. MULTITUDE THEREFORE) *answered Him, We have heard out of the law that Christ* (R. V. THE CHRIST) *abideth for ever: and how sayest Thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?*” “The people—the multitude (ὄχλος)—answered Him, ‘We have heard out of the law,—meaning the Scriptures of the Old Testament; referring, no doubt, to such places as Psalms lxxxix. 28, 29; ex. 4; Dan. ii. 44; vii. 13, 14, ‘that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest Thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?’ How can that consist with this ‘uplifting?’ They saw very well both that He was holding Himself up as the Christ, and a Christ to die a violent death; and as that ran counter to all their ideas of the Messianic prophecies, they were glad to get this seeming advantage to justify their unyielding attitude.” Perhaps the allusion is especially to Daniel, who describes Him as coming in the “clouds of heaven with great glory.” And they meant, How can this be the Son of man who is going to die the death of crucifixion?

Ver. 35.—“*Then Jesus* (R. V. JESUS

THEREFORE) *said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with* (R. V. AMONG) *you. Walk while ye have the light, lest* (R. V. THAT) *darkness come upon you*” (R. V. OVERTAKE YOU NOT). Christ, ignoring their quibblings, exhorts them to a proper use of their opportunity. He was the *Light*, and He was with them now. He would soon leave them, and this was their opportunity. “*He that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.*” This implies, that whoever avails himself not of the “*Light*” which Christ reflects, walks in darkness; and whoever walks in darkness walks in peril.

Ver. 36.—“*While ye have* (R. V. THE) *light, believe in* (R. V. ON) *the light.*” Which means, “While ye have Me, believe in Me; you will not have Me long.” “*That ye may be the children* (R. V. SONS) *of light.*” The recipients and the reflectors of the true light. “*These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide* (R. V. HE DEPARTED AND HID) *Himself from them.*” Why did He hide Himself? To talk more with them would be waste of time and energy. Whither did He go to hide Himself? Probably He retired to Bethany. (See Matt. xxi. 17; Luke xxi. 7.)

HOMILETICS.

The subject of these verses is *the Crucifixion of Christ*. The most extraordinarily suggestive and morally powerful fact in the history of mankind—a fact that may be viewed *historically*, *theologically*, and *ethically*—a fact to which all the past seemed to point, and from which all that is beneficent in the future seems to start. There are many ways of looking at this fact. The passage before us seems to present it to us in three aspects—

I.—AS AN INSTRUMENT TO ATTRACT ALL.

“*Draw all men.*” Though in the original “men” are not mentioned, men are meant, for “all” is in the masculine gender. Observe—

First: The Cross is to draw “*all men.*” It does not say, all the *elect*, nor all the *Jews*, nor all of this *nation*, or of this *Church*, or of this *tribe*, but “*all men*” of every land and time. The Cross is for *humanity*. Observe—

Secondly: The Cross is to draw “*all men*” to Christ. “*Unto Me.*”

Not merely to My system of doctrine, purpose, or government, but to *Me*, the living, loving Son of God, the Saviour of the world. As gravitation draws all rivulets to the sea, the Cross is to draw all men to Christ. (1.) The Cross has the power to draw the *intellect* of all men to Him. As the most stupendous phenomenon in history, it challenges the investigation of all. (2.) The Cross has the power to attract the *hearts* of all. As the centre of infinite interest, it is potent enough to awaken the profoundest sympathies of all. All! Does this furnish a hope for the moral restitution of all human souls? Would it were so. Another aspect in which the passage presents the Crucifixion is—

II.—AS AN EVENT MISUNDERSTOOD BY SOME.

“*The people answered Him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest Thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?*” “*Out of the law,*” that is, by the reading as well as by the explanation of their Scripture. They considered perhaps that Psalm cx. 4; Isaiah ix. 7; Daniel vii. 13, referred to Christ. In such passages the person is spoken of as the “Ancient of days;” as “One that is to continue for ever;” One “whose kingdom is to have no end.” Their question would be therefore, “If Thou art to die, how canst Thou be the Messiah?” “*Who is this Son of man?*” We know who the Son of man in the Old Testament is; but who is *this* Son of man? Men have always misunderstood the Cross. It is “foolishness to the Greek, and a stumblingblock to the Jew.” (1.) Some now speak of the Cross as a transaction that will appease the wrath of the Almighty; (2.) Some, as a transaction that will purchase human souls; (3.) Some, as the procuring cause of God’s love for the world. Whereas the Cross is the *effect*, the *demonstration*, and the *channel* of God’s love for man. Another aspect in which the passage presents the Cross is—

III.—AS A FACT EXPLAINED BY CHRIST.

How does He explain their difficulties? Not by descending into logical disquisition. But by exhorting them to practise holiness. “*Walk in the light.*”* It is the pure heart, not the logical understanding, that solves the great problems of Christianity. “He that doeth the will of God shall know of the doctrine.” “The carnal mind discerneth not the things of the Spirit, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.” He seems to urge the spirit of holiness on three considerations—

First: Their possession of a special advantage. They had the “*light*” with them. From His presence, words, deeds, and spirit, holiness beamed brightly on them. They were moving in the rays of the highest moral excellence.

* See Germ, p. 366.

Secondly : Their special advantage was only temporary. "*Yet a little while.*" He would not be with them long. A few days more, and He would be gone ; the moral Sun would set. Men's opportunities for spiritual improvements are very temporary. Their light soon grows dim.

Thirdly : The departure of their special advantage would expose them to danger. "*He that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.*" To walk on in moral darkness to the great eternity, how dismal and how dangerous !

Fourthly : The right use of their advantage would fill them with light. "*Believe in the light, that ye may become the children of light,*" or sons of light. Trusting in Christ, the true light will fill the soul with Divine illumination. "The entrance of Thy Word giveth light !" Sons of light ! All luminous.

CONCLUSION. Thank God for the Cross. Hold up the Cross to draw the world to Christ. Solve men's difficulties concerning the Cross, not by argumentation, but by the strongest exhortation—the life of practical holiness. "It is an endless work," says *Mr. Robertson* of Brighton, "to be uprooting weeds. Plant the ground with wholesome vegetation, and then the juices which would have otherwise fed rankness will form themselves into a more vigorous growth : the dwindled weeds will be easily raked out then. It is an endless task the refuting error. Plant truth, and then the error will pine away."

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. XLIV.

SONS OF LIGHT.

"While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light."—xii. 36.

Notice three things here—

I.—THE GREATEST PRIVILEGE OF HUMANITY.

"*While ye have the light.*" That is, the light of Christ's character. His character includes of course all He taught, did, and suffered. The whole forms the moral light of humanity. All the light of philosophy is dimness to this. It is not only luminous to the intellect, but light to the conscience and heart.

II.—THE GREATEST WORK OF HUMANITY.

"*Believe in the light.*" Faith in Christ does not mean mere intellectual credence. There is neither effort or virtue in this ; but a practical trust in Him : not what men say about Him in old creeds and theologies, but in Him.

III.—THE GREATEST HONOUR OF HUMANITY.

"*That ye may be the children of light,*" or sons of the light. Light in the Scripture is the emblem of intelligence, purity, joyousness, usefulness.

No. XCII.

A GUILTY UNBELIEF, A COWARDLY FAITH, AND A REDEMPTIVE TRUSTFULNESS.

(*The unbelief of the Jews.*—JOHN xii. 37—50.)

"But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him," &c.—xii. 37—46.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—It is the manner of our Evangelist alone, as has been frequently remarked, to record his own reflections on the scenes he describes. But here having arrived at what was virtually the close of Our Lord's public ministry, he casts an affecting glance over the fruitfulness of His whole ministry on the bulk of the now doomed people.

Ver. 37.—"*But though He had done so many miracles (R. V. SIGNS) before them, yet they believed not on Him.*" Christ had done great signs amongst them. These signs were intended and adapted to settle their faith on Him, but had failed to do so.

Ver. 38.—"*That the saying of Esaias (R. V. WORD OF ISAIAH) the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?*" The passage referred to may be found in Isaiah vi. 10. St. Chrysostom truly says, it is not because "Esaias said so they did not believe, but because they would not believe Esaias said this." Because it was thus predicted, the Evangelist speaks as if they so acted in order to make the prediction true.

Vers. 39, 40.—"*Therefore (R. V. FOR THIS CAUSE) they could not believe, because (R. V. FOR) that Esaias (R. V. ISAIAH) said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened (R. V. HE HARDENED) their heart; that they should not (R. V. LEST THEY SHOULD) see with their eyes, nor understand (R. V. AND PERCEIVE) with their heart, and be converted (R. V. SHOULD TURN), and I should heal them.*" They could not believe, not because of what Esaias had said, nor

because there was a Divine purpose that they should not, but because of the state of their hearts. Their inability to believe was moral, not physical—a crime, not a misfortune. It grew out of the self-contracted blindness of mind referred to in the verses. The quotation here, it should be observed, does not follow exactly either the Hebrew or the Greek of the passage in Isaiah.

Ver. 41.—"*These things said Esaias (R. V. ISAIAH), when (R. V. BECAUSE) he saw His glory, and spake (R. V. HE SPAKE) of Him.*" (See Isaiah vi. 1.) It was the Messianic glory that Esaias saw filling the temple.

Ver. 42.—"*Nevertheless among (R. V. EVEN OF) the chief (R. V. OMITS CHIEF) rulers also many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him (R. V. IT), lest they should be put out of the synagogue.*" "The chief rulers (*καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἀρχόντων*) rather, even of the rulers, such as Nicodemus and Joseph, many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees, that is, the leaders of this sect, for they were of it themselves, they did not confess Him—or confess it (*οὐχ ὁμολόγουν*)—did not make an open confession of their faith in Jesus, lest they should be put out of the synagogue."

Ver. 43.—"*For they loved the praise (R. V. GLORY) of men more than the praise (R. V. GLORY) of God.*" "A severe remark, considering that several at least of these persons afterwards boldly confessed Christ. It indicates the displeasure with which God regarded their conduct at this time, and with which He continues to regard similar conduct."—*Webster and Wilkinson*. Some read, they

loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God.

The following remarks of *Godet* on vers. 37, 38 are pertinent and philosophical: "As to the relation of Jewish unbelief to the Divine prevision (vers. 37 and 38), St. John does not point out the metaphysical theory by means of which he was able to reconcile God's foreknowledge and man's responsibility, but simply accepts these two data—the one of the religious sentiment, the other of the moral consciousness. But if we reflect that God is above time—that, properly speaking, He does not *foresee* a fact which, so far as we are concerned, is still future, but *sees* it absolutely, as we contemplate one present—that, consequently, when He announces it at any moment, as well before as after its accomplishment, He does not *predict*, but describes it as a spectator and witness—the apparent contradiction of the two *apparently* contradictory elements vanishes. Undoubtedly the fact, once predicted, cannot fail to happen, since the sight of God cannot show Him as *being* that which will not be. But the fact does not take place because God saw it; but, on the contrary, God said it because in His eyes it *is*. Hence the true cause of that Jewish unbelief which God announced was not His foreseeing it. This cause in its ultimate analysis

was the moral state of the people themselves. It was that state which, when it had once become permanent, necessarily involved the final unbelief of Israel, as being on the one hand its deserved punishment, and on the other the condition of the salvation of the Gentiles."

Ver. 44.—"*Jesus* (R. V. AND JESUS) *cried and said*." If possible with greater earnestness, solemnity, and in a louder tone, Christ now speaks. What is here recorded to the end of the chapter He has uttered before more than once. "*He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me, but on Him that sent Me*." "A perfect anti-thesis," says *Lange*, "to the honour-seeking party of the Jews which was the cause of their unbelief, is here presented to us in the testimony of Jesus concerning Him-self." The faith He required in Him, was faith in the living God.

Ver. 45.—"*And he that seeth* (R. V. BEHOLDETH) *Me, seeth* (R. V. BEHOLDETH) *Him that sent Me*." I am the incarnation, the image of God; God is to be seen in Me—"I and My Father are one."

Ver. 46.—"*I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should* (R. V. MAY) *not abide in darkness*." This He had often said before. Faith in Him is the moral light of men.

HOMILETICS.

These verses bring under our attention three subjects for thought—a *guilty unbelief*, a *cowardly faith*, and a *redemptive trustfulness*.

Here we have—

I.—A GUILTY UNBELIEF.

"*But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him*." Why did they not believe?

First: Not for the want of evidence. For "*many miracles*" and signs had been wrought amongst them. I grant that a miracle itself cannot prove the Divinity either of the person or doctrine of the worker, unless it could be proved, as it cannot, that—(1.) No being but God can perform what we call miracles, and—(2.) If no one but He could do so, that He would never except to establish the true. Who can prove this? Suppose a being whose character was repugnant to our ideas of virtue, and whose doctrines were

repugnant to our ideas of truth, were to perform what we consider a miracle, his miracle could not by any possibility prove to us that he was a Divine messenger. A miracle only becomes a proof as the character of the miracle-worker accords with our idea of Divine power and excellence. Whilst He did works, therefore, which no other man could do, He lived a life of sublime excellence which no other man ever lived. His miracles were therefore evidences, powerful evidences. These evidences they had in abundance—"many miracles." "If they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." Why did they not believe?

Secondly: Not for the want of warning. Their Scriptures abounded with examples of the evils of unbelief. Esaias preached; and so unbelieving were his hearers that he exclaimed, "*Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?*" * What judgments the unbelief of the hearers of the old prophet brought upon themselves! They must have known this, and should have taken the warning. The preaching of Esaias, instead of enlightening them, blinded their eyes; instead of filling them with contrition, "*blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart.*"† The ministry, then, that was intended by God, and fitted by Him, to bring them to spiritual knowledge and repentance, they by their depravity turned to opposite results. Here then was warning enough for them. Hence the guiltiness of their unbelief. When a man has not three things—*evidence*, the *capacity* for examining evidence, and the *opportunity* for doing so—his unbelief is not guilty unbelief. This is not the unbelief in England to-day; it is not innocent, but criminal.

Another subject here presented is—

II.—A COWARDLY FAITH.

"Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue," &c. These men had not the courage to utter their convictions. Two things made them cowardly.

First: Fear of men. "*Because of the Pharisees.*" The Pharisees were the leaders of the sect—men of great influence in the State, and of intolerant spirits. These rulers, such as Nicodemus and Joseph, had not the courage to say to the face of these men, We believe in Christ. Alas! how many in every age, and how many now, are found whose faith in Christ is too cowardly for confession. They are afraid of their contemporaries, their associates. Verily, this is a poor kind of faith. I question whether it has any virtue in it. The other thing that made them cowardly was—

* See "Genius of the Gospel" on Matthew.

† See Germ. p. 370.

Secondly : Love of popularity. "*For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.*" Perhaps the word "glory" would be better than the word "*praise*" in both instances. Observe—(1.) It is implied, between the glory of men and the glory of God there is an essential difference. What is glory in the estimation of men ? Wealth, fame, titles, pageantries, &c. &c. In the eye of God, these are worthless rubbish. What is the glory of God ? Moral holiness. When Moses asked Jehovah of old to show him His glory, His answer was, "I will cause all My goodness to pass before thee." Observe—(2.) It is implied that a higher appreciation of the glory of men than the glory of God is inimical to a courageous faith. Hence these rulers had no heroism in their convictions. The faith of Peter when he stood before the Sanhedrim and exclaimed, "We cannot but speak the things which we have heard," is faith of the true type. Another subject here is—

III.—A REDEMPTIVE TRUSTFULNESS.

Two remarks are suggested concerning this kind of faith.

First : It is faith in His identity with the Father. "*He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me, but on Him that sent Me.*" Christ claimed no position independent of the Father. "*And he that seeth Me, seeth Him that sent Me,*" which means, in Me the Eternal is to be seen. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Between the spirit, purpose, and character of Christ and that of the Father there was a perfect oneness : "I and My Father are One." A redemptive trustfulness therefore must have faith in Christ, not only as the Divinely sent, but as the Divinely-imaged and Divinely-natured. Another remark is that—

Secondly : It is faith, the absence of which tends to a terrible doom. "*Shall not abide in darkness.*" What is it to abide in darkness ?—in the darkness of ignorance, remorse, and despair ! Ah, what ?

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. XLV.

THE GOSPEL REPORT.

"That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report ? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed ? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart ; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw His glory, and spake of Him."—xii. 38—41.

In connection with what I have written on this passage, the following general remarks may tend to clear up difficulties and

enforce solemn truths. The word "*report*" here I take to mean Redemptive Truth, or the *Gospel*, and on it offer the following remarks.

I.—THAT THE GOSPEL REPORT IS TRUE AND DIVINELY MIGHTY.

First: It is true because it is implied that it ought to be "*believed*." What is genuinely believable must be true.

Secondly: It is Divinely "*mighty*," for it is called the "*arm of the Lord*." There is Divine power in Redemptive Truth. It is "the power of God unto salvation."

II.—THOUGH TRUE, ITS TRUTH IS OFTEN UNBELIEVED AND UNFELT.

It was so in the days of the prophets, the days of Christ, the days of the apostles, and through all subsequent times. "*Therefore they could not believe*." Why? Not because of Esaias' prediction, not because of any Divine decree, but because of the state of their minds. They had "*blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart*," &c. So long as men are in the depths of moral corruption they can neither see nor feel Divine things. A malignant nature cannot see love, and a mercenary, avaricious nature cannot feel and see the generous and disinterested.

III.—THESE MORAL STATES OF MIND INIMICAL TO FAITH ARE OFTEN INTENSIFIED BY LISTENING TO THE REPORT.

"*He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart*." These words are quoted several times in the New Testament. Christ quotes them in Matt. xiii. 14, and Paul quotes them in Acts xxviii. 26. It is a fact proved by the nature of things, and patent to the observation and consciousness of all, that the hearer of the Gospel that believes not, is made more blind and hard by listening. Men, as free agents, have the power of counteracting the moral tendency of things, turning blessings into curses, and curses into blessings. The unbelieving man is ever doing the former, and the man of genuine faith the latter.

IV.—THE AWFUL RESULTS OF THE GOSPEL UPON MEN POSSESSING THESE STATES OF MIND ARE ALL FOREKNOWN OF GOD.

The prophet was told what would be the fate of his "*report*." God knew that men would be morally injured by the report He commanded the prophet to deliver. He foresees all, the good and the bad. But His foreknowledge did not render the result *necessary*, interfered not with their freedom of action, nor lessened in the least the amount of their guilt.

V.—ALTHOUGH GOD FOREKNOWS THE TERRIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF THE GOSPEL UPON THE UNBELIEVING HEARER, HE STILL COMMANDS IT TO BE PREACHED.

In the prophecy here quoted we have these remarkable words, "Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy," &c. Christ Himself said (John ix. 39), "I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind." The proclaiming of Gospel truth is a good in itself, and a good to the universe, though it may enhance the guilt and misery of millions. Though He knows that storms will spread fearful devastation over sea and land, yet He sends forth storms. Man is not the only creature in the universe to be served, nor yet the chief creature, although in our egotism we fancy him the being for whom the world was made. Men once thought that this earth was the centre of the system to which it belongs, that all the heavenly bodies moved around it, and were attendant on it. That geocentric theory has vanished as a dream. It will be so one day with that egotistic theory that man is the moral centre of Divine Providence, that all things are made to serve him.

No. XCIII.

ASPECTS OF CHRIST'S WORDS.

"And if any man hear My words, and believe not, I judge him not," &c.—
xii. 47—50.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 47.—*"If any man hear My words (R. V. SAYINGS), and believe not (R. V. KEEP THEM NOT), I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world."* God sent not His Son to condemn the world. (See chap. iii. 17.)

Ver. 48.—*"He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words (R. V. SAYINGS), hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken (R. V. SPAKE), the same shall judge him in the last day."* Because Christ, in His Person, life, and teaching, is the perfect manifestation of God's mind, His teaching will be the grand and only criterion in the day of judgment. Christ Himself is now, and ever will be the standard of judgment by which our character will be tried.

Ver. 49.—*"For I have not spoken (R. V. SPAKE NOT) of (R. V. FROM) My-*

self; but the Father which sent Me, He gave (R. V. HATH GIVEN) Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." Here is assigned the reason why His word shall be the rule in the last judgment.

Ver. 50.—*"And I know that His commandment is life everlasting (R. V. ETERNAL): whatsoever I speak (R. V. THE THINGS THEREFORE WHICH I SPEAK) therefore, even as the Father said (R. V. HATH SAID) unto Me, so I speak."* Our Lord here in closing His public discourses sets this solemn seal to His message: His commandment is "life everlasting."

Through the remainder of this entire Gospel, including chapters xiii.—xxi., nearly the half of the whole, we have only the *private* ministry of Christ. His public ministry is now closed. Hence on He addresses Him-

self to those who have been called His apostles and colleagues ; and then He was tried, condemned, crucified,

buried, rises from His grave, says a few more wonderful words to His disciples, and the curtain falls. He is in heaven.

HOMILETICS.

This passage leads us to look at the *Words of Christ* in several aspects—

I.—AS LAWS TO BE OBEYED.

“*If any man hear My words, and believe not.*” * The words of Christ are not like poetry for entertainment, or abstract science for speculative thought ; they are laws to be *kept* ; not so much a *creed* as a *code*. They come with Divine authority, they demand obedience. It is only as His words are translated into actions and embodied in actual life, that their mission is answered, that they are of any real and lasting service to man. Look at the words—

II.—AS A MEANS OF SALVATION.

“*For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.*” Had He come to “*judge the world*” His words would not have been what they are now, they would have breathed the indignation of insulted justice. But He came to save, and hence His words are full of all that can restore man to holiness and to God. The salvation which Christ speaks of is not the miserable thing that it is represented from popular pulpits—a salvation from eternal fire to some local paradise—but a restoration from *spiritual ignorance to intelligence*, from *selfishness to benevolence*, from *bondage to freedom*, from *inward conflict to inner harmony*, from *social perniciousness to social utility*. This is the salvation which Christ came to effect, and for which His signs and words are adapted. “*Save the world*”—not a class. Look at the words—

III.—AS CRITERIA OF JUDGMENT.

“*He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him : the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.*” † The man to whom Christ has spoken, and who *rejects*, or nullifies His word, needs no other judge than His words. These words will judge him—judge him in his own conscience ; they will condemn him for his *ingratitude, folly, rebellion*. Look at the words—

IV.—AS EXPRESSIONS OF THE FATHER.

“*For I have not spoken of Myself : ‡ but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment.*” Christ’s thoughts He does not ascribe to the fertility of His own intellect, but traces to the Infinite Source of all truth and intelligence. Whatever other

* See Germ, p. 374.

† See Germ, p. 375.

‡ See Germ, p. 375.

teacher ever said this? And are not His ideas such as to justify Him in ascribing them to God, so congruous, when rightly interpreted, with *à priori* reasonings, moral intuitions, conscience, and the deep-felt exigencies of the human soul? They are as true to the soul as the sun is to the eye, as the vital air is to the heaving lungs. Look at the words—

V.—AS DEPOSITORIES OF LIFE.

“*And I know that His commandment is life everlasting.*” Or, eternal life; which is better. Christ’s words are spirit and life; they are the “incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth for ever;” they have in them the germs of a blessed immortality.

CONCLUSION. “See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh.” Ponder Christ’s words; do not let the interpretations of a sectarian theology take you away from their deep moral significance. Let His words enter you, dwell in you, and reign within you, for they are “*life everlasting.*”

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. XLVI.

A GREAT PRIVILEGE, AND A TERRIBLE POSSIBILITY.

“And if any man hear My words, and believe not, I judge him not.”—xii. 47.

Observe here three momentous subjects.

I.—THE GREATEST SPIRITUAL PRIVILEGE THAT A MAN CAN HAVE ON THIS EARTH.

To “*hear the words*” of Christ. It is a priceless privilege to hear the words of any great sage, poet, moralist. But what are the best human words compared with the words of Christ? They are “Spirit” and “Life,” more pure than crystal, more refreshing than the morning breeze, more quickening than the sunbeam, they are re-creative forces. What have they accomplished ere now?

Observe here—

II.—THE GREATEST CRIMINAL NEGLECT OF WHICH A MAN CAN BE GUILTY.

“*If any man hear My words, and believe not,*” or keep them not. The man who hears Christ’s words and keeps them not is guilty of—(1.) The most *egregious folly*. (2.) The most *heinous ingratitude*. (3.) The most *hardened impiety*.

Observe here—

III.—THE MOST TERRIBLE DOOM THAT A MAN CAN APPREHEND.

“*I judge him not.*” The meaning of this is—I as a Saviour have nothing more to do with him; I leave him to the retributive

treatment of My Father. Mercy leaves him, and justice apprehends him.

No. XLVII.

THE REDEMPTIVE BECOMING RETRIBUTIVE.

“He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”—xii. 48.

Observe—

I.—CHRISTIANITY MAY BE REJECTED NOW.

“*He that rejecteth Me.*” There are millions still rejecting Christ. They do not accept Him as the only spiritual Redeemer and supreme moral Commander. Christendom to a great extent accepts Him in creed, and rejects Him in conduct.

II.—THOSE WHO REJECT CHRISTIANITY NOW, MUST BOW TO ITS JUDICIAL FORCE HEREAFTER.

“*The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.*” “*The last day*” is the *retributive period that awaits us all*. In that period the “*word*” that has been trodden under foot rises from the dust and takes the throne. (1.) *There is nothing arbitrary in the decision or the procedure of the last judgment.* The glorious words of mercy which are rejected will spring from their graves, and conscience will invest them with the authority of an inexorable judge. (2.) *Man should be profoundly cautious as to how to treat the words of Christ now.* His words are not sounds, but things—terrible things; not vocables, but vitalities. They must live for ever in every soul into which they have fallen. Old sermons will be preached again by memory many ages on. Old preachers will reappear. “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?”

No. XLVIII.

CHRIST AS A TEACHER.

“For I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.”—xii. 49.

Here we have Christ as a Teacher—and notice—

I.—HIS PROFOUND HUMILITY.

“*For I have not spoken of Myself.*” As if He had said, I take no credit for the thoughts that I have addressed to men: they are not the flashes of My own genius or the conclusions of My own reason. I am not their fountain, but their channel. A teacher is *great and Divine just in proportion to his humility*. Alas! the vanity of preachers has become proverbial. Notice—

II.—HIS CONSCIOUS DIVINITY.

"*But the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment.*" He felt that what He said was not His own. It did not spring up within Him, but came to Him as from a Divine messenger. It is a general truth, that no man is a true spiritual teacher who is not conscious that the thoughts he utters are not his own, but God's. As he loses his egotism in preaching, he alone rises to an efficient ministry. "When I am weak, then am I strong."

No. XCIV.

SOME OF THE WONDERS OF CHRIST'S DEATH.

(*Jesus washes the feet of His disciples.* Jerusalem.—JOHN xiii. 1—20.)

"Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end."
—xiii. 1.

Here begins the *second division* of John's gospel. In the first division Christ is revealed in His works, discourses, and conflicts with the Jews. In all these He appears in superhuman glory. In this second division He appears in a more private capacity. Communion with His disciples, interceding with the Everlasting Father, betrayed, tried, condemned, crucified, rising from the dead, reappearing to His disciples, and continuing with them for forty days.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 1.—"*Now before the feast of the Passover.*" "It was past three o'clock, the commencement of the (Matthew, Mark, Luke) first (Matthew, Mark) day of unleavened bread (Matthew, Mark, Luke),—at a later period of which, as the Law enjoined (Luke), men were in the habit of killing the Paschal lamb (Mark), when the disciples joined Him (Matthew). Where, asked they (Matthew, Mark),—or Peter and John, in response to His command to go and get ready the Passover for Himself and His disciples (Luke),—were preparations to be made? He bade (Matthew, Mark, Luke) them (Matthew), or two of them (Mark),—these the two just mentioned (Luke),—go into the city (Matthew, Mark, Luke), to such an one (Matthew), whom they would discover by following a man who met

them carrying a pitcher of water (Mark, Luke), and tell him that the Master's time was at hand, that at his house was He keeping the Passover with His disciples (Matthew); inquiring in His name for the guestchamber in which to hold the feast. They would be shown a large upper room, furnished (Mark, Luke) and prepared after the custom of that season (Mark). There they were to make ready. They went, and found as their Master had indicated (Mark, Luke). They did as He commanded (Matthew), and made ready the Passover (Matthew, Mark, Luke), though a full day before the regular time for the feast (John). At the commencement of the second evening (Matthew, Mark), at the appointed hour of six o'clock (Luke), Jesus came along with the twelve and sat down (Matthew, Mark, Luke)." (See "Historical Sketch of the Life of our Lord," by W. Ireland Gordon, M.A., B.D.) "*When Jesus knew* (R. v. KNOWING) *that His hour was come*"; or, according to Lange and Godet, Jesus knowing that His hour was coming. "Jesus knowing that." "These words show the prevailing thought of our Lord's mind during these highest manifestations of His love. He knew that the hour of His return to the Father and His separation from His disciples was at hand."—*Dr. Godet.*

Jesus had withdrawn Himself; but now, as the great public religious feast was at hand—the Passover,—He was drawn forth by the consciousness that “*His hour was come.*” It is the fourth Passover, and it is the last that He will ever attend. The festival began on the fifteenth of the month, and lasted seven days. “*Depart out of this world unto the Father.*” What a blessed change! leaving a scene of moral pollution, enmity, and tumult, and entering into the presence of Infinite purity, love, and peace. “*Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.*” This expression does not mean, “as He had loved them, He continued to do so;” but, “if He had loved them before, it was now that it was fully seen how much He loved them.” “The expression *His own*, expresses the value His heart attached to these beings given Him by the Father,

whom He was about to leave in so critical a position. Εἰς τέλος does not seem to have in Greek the meaning *unto the end*. At least Passow does not give this meaning, nor does the N.T. seem to furnish an example of it. In the two passages, Luke xviii. 5, and 1 Thess. ii. 16, we must translate *at last*, or *to finish*, a sense which this phrase has also in classical Greek (Passow), but which is inappropriate here. The usual meaning of εἰς τέλος in good Greek is, *to an extreme, to the greatest degree*; and this is also the most suitable in this verse. At these last moments, the manifestations of His affection attained a degree of intensity which they had not hitherto reached; they went so far as to completely pour forth this feeling, and, in some sort, to exhaust it. This is the sense which we have endeavoured to give in our translation.”—*Dr. Godet.*

HOMILETICS.

This verse suggests three wonderful facts in relation to *Christ's death*.

I.—HE HAD A DIVINE PRESENTIMENT OF THE EXACT TIME OF HIS DEATH.

“*When Jesus knew that His hour was come,*” or knowing that His hour was come. All men have the sentiment that they must die sooner or later. This, like a law, is written in them. It throws a shadow along the path of life, from the beginning to its close. It mingles with all our earnest thinkings, it colours our ideas, it often chills the heart, and sends a quiver through every nerve. But we have not the presentiment as to the exact *time* of our dissolution. This in mercy is hidden from us. If we had it, we should be rendered utterly unfit to enjoy the blessings or to discharge the duties of life. But Christ had this presentiment. He knew the “*hour.*” It stood before His mind with all its attendant horrors. Now, it is worthy of remark, that with this presentiment, instead of shrinking from death or endeavouring to avoid it, He comes forth to meet it. In the preceding chapter (verse 36) we are informed that He had gone into concealment. But now, at the great religious festival of the nation, He leaves His solitude and comes forth to meet His destiny. This argues at any rate His superhumanity. What mere man would have done this—done it with such heroic calmness?

II.—HE HAD A GLORIOUS VIEW OF THE NATURE OF HIS DEATH.

He did not think of His death with a particle of horror, but as a grand moral mission. It was going from the world to the Father, "*that He should depart out of this world unto the Father.*" To Him—

First: It was a departure from this world. With the exception of the ten thousand beauties and countless blessings of the earth, and the splendour of the heavens that encircle it, there was everything in the world that must have been in the highest degree repugnant to His moral tastes and aims. It is a world of rebels against the government of His Father, a world of enemies to Himself, and to all that is pure and good. To Him it must have been more uncongenial than the cell to the prisoner, the foul lazaretto to the man of health. To leave such a scene as this could not have been a matter of regret; it was rather a matter of earnest desire and strong expectation. May not every good man look upon death in this aspect? What is there in the *human* world to interest him? To Him—

Secondly: It was going to His Father. The language seems to imply that one who lives in a corrupt world, however pure he may be, is to some extent separate from the Father. The senses and our corrupt character seem to some degree to shut out the spiritually pure and beautiful. The Father is everywhere, but is only seen by those who can extricate themselves from the materialistic and immoral. (1.) In going to the Father, He would get the highest approbation of His work. He had come into the world to do the "will of His Father," and that will He had wrought out to the death. Here He heard no approving voice save that of His own conscience. Now He is to have the "Well done, good and faithful servant," of His Father. (2.) In going to the Father, He would enjoy the sublimest fellowship. We are told that "In His presence is fulness of joy," and "At His right hand there are pleasures for evermore." May not every good man take this view of death? passing out of the world to the Father? Why, then, mourn the death of the good? They have not gone out of existence, but rather passed from a corrupt scene of existence into a pure and blessed one.

III.—HE HAD A SUBLIME MOTIVE FOR MEETING WITH HIS DEATH.

What was that? Love for humanity. "*Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.*" Who were "*His own*?" Some say, His few disciples then existing. Some say, the elect. Others say, the whole human world. One thing is certain, that "*His own*" are those in every land and age who consecrate themselves to the will, the service, and glory of that God

whose we are. They are "*His own*." Love for such,—and all men are *potentially* such,—was His motive. He loved the world and gave Himself for it. "He tasted death for every man." This was the sublime motive, and this sublime motive carried Him on to the end of His mission. "*Loved them unto the end*" (extremely), or, according to Godet, "*He perfectly manifested His love to them*." He went on to the full demonstration of it on the cross. His love bore Him on, until, on the cross, He exclaimed, "It is finished." What love was this! Unmerited, compassionate, unbounded, unconquerable love! "*Unto the end*." It continues—(1.) To the end of every man's existence; (2.) To the end of the mediatorial system. Nay, will it ever have an end? Never in *essence*, but in *achievement*.

No. XCV.

CHRIST WASHING HIS DISCIPLES' FEET. (No. 1.)

"And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him," &c.—xiii. 2—7.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 2.—"*And supper being ended*" (R. V. DURING SUPPER). It is clear from verses 25—28 of this chapter that supper was not "*ended*" at this point; and it is necessary therefore to ask whether the Original does not admit of a better translation. It does so, as some of the best scholars aver. Godet, for example, translates thus: "And supper having taken place." Ellicott: "And it now becoming supper-time." The idea perhaps is, supper having arrived or being in process. "*The devil having now* (R. V. ALREADY) *put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him*." Some read as if the "*heart*" here meant the heart of the devil: the devil having now decided in his heart. But this meaning cannot be justified either on philological or theological grounds. Our version, however, gives the true sense as well as the true translation. The devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, that he should betray Him. "*Judas Iscariot, Simon's son*." "The name is given here in the sadfulness of this mournful record. The fact is recorded here to explain the references to Judas which follow in our Lord's words (verses 10, 18, 21, 26, 27, 30)."—H. Watkins, M.A.

Ver. 3.—"*Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come* (R. V. CAME FORTH) *from God, and went to* (R. V. AND GOETH UNTO) *God*." "This '*knowing*' corresponds with that of verse 1; and here, even more frequently than in the latter passage, commentators are wont to paraphrase it as '*though knowing*.' But this is in our opinion a still graver misconception of the Evangelist's meaning, as well as that of Jesus Himself, than at verse 1. It was not, notwithstanding His Divine greatness, but because of that greatness, that Jesus humbled Himself in the manner about to be related. Feeling Himself the greatest, He also felt that it was for Him to give the example of true greatness by humbling Himself to fulfil the office of the lowest: for greatness in the Messianic kingdom as He had come to establish it would consist in voluntary abasement. This was a kind of greatness hitherto unknown in the world, and which His own were now to behold in Him, that His Church might never acknowledge any other. It was therefore, *inasmuch* as He was Lord, and not *though* He was Lord, that He was about to fulfil the office of a slave."—Godet.

Ver. 4.—"*He riseth from supper,*

and laid (R. V. LAYETH) aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself." In Luke xxii. there is the record of a strife among the disciples as to whom among them should be accounted the greatest; and now Christ, by an acted parable, shows them that greatness is in service. Here He Himself not only serves, but puts on the garb of a servant. He strips Himself of His outward garments and girds Himself with a towel. *Tholuck* understands "that our Lord had already reclined at the table, and that, as they had no servants, the feet-washing would naturally have been done by one of the disciples. The things necessary for it were at hand. As the disciples are delating who shall undertake it, Jesus no longer remains in His reclining posture, but rises Himself to perform this duty of a servant, to show His condescending love in this closing transaction."

Ver. 5.—"After that (R. V. THEN) He poureth water into a (R. V. THE) bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded." Such a vessel would of course be at hand, as it was the custom at feasts to wash the feet of guests (1 Sam. xxv.). The reason of this custom is obvious: travelling in a hot country with sandals, exposed the feet to dust. "Did not the feet-washing at other times precede the supper? We remark, in reply, that the fact that

they had already gone to the table by no means implies necessarily that this washing did not precede their eating: it was customary to wash the outstretched feet as the guests lay upon the cushions, as in Luke vii. 38."—*Tholuck*.

Ver. 6.—"Then cometh He (R. V. SO HE COMETH) to Simon Peter: and Peter (R. V. HE) said unto Him, Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?" The sense of Christ's moral superiority which came out in an exclamation of Peter's on a former occasion (Luke v. 8), "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," he now felt perhaps when Christ approached him in order to wash his feet. "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?" Is it possible that Thou art so condescending as this? Thou is to be strongly emphasized.

Ver. 7.—"Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now." Here both the pronouns are emphatic, and convey a rebuke to Peter. His words had almost implied that the Lord's act was wholly out of place, as of one who knew not what he was doing. The opposite was really the case. "But thou shalt know (R. V. UNDERSTAND) hereafter," i. e. in the teaching which is to follow (vers. 13—17). The word rendered "hereafter" is different from that rendered "afterwards" in verse 36. The precise meaning is, "after these things." The sense is then, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt come to know presently."

HOMILETICS.

Our subject is *Christ washing His disciples' feet*. In this paragraph we have three subjects of great interest and importance, a great crime suggestively stated, a great character infinitely condescending, and a great truth symbolically expressed.

I.—A GREAT CRIME SUGGESTIVELY STATED.

"And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him." An account of this criminal transaction we have more fully given in the Synoptists (Matt. xxvi. 14—16; Mark xiv. 10, 11; Luke xxii. 3—6). It had taken place some hours before the supper. The traitor had struck the bargain with the chief priests in the temple, and pledged himself to the guilty act for thirty shekels of the sanctuary,

the mere price of a slave. We have here the *genesis* of this crime: there are *two factors*, the devil and Judas. A pretty full description is given of Judas. He was Judas Iscariot, and Simon's son. Thus he is marked off from every other man of his name. This man, like many sons, by his infamous conduct brought disgrace upon his father's name. As to the devil—the other factor—much is said in Scripture about him. This being, who in Greek is Diabolos, is in Hebrew Satan. The Bible assumes that he is not a principle, but a personality, and he is represented as an accuser, a murderer, a liar, the arch-enemy of God and man. Now the expression here, that "*the devil put into the heart of Judas*," shows three things.

First: The accessibility of this infernal spirit to the human soul. He has ways of entering it, he knows its avenues, and avails himself of them. Through the bodily senses and the inner propensities, he can touch the springs of human activity, inject thoughts that will fire the passions and turn the will. His "fiery darts" are numerous, and from his bow they go forth, silent as the night, rapid as the sunbeam. Let us beware of his "devices." The expression shows—

Secondly: The tendency of the human soul to be influenced by Satanic impressions. In spiritual natures that retain their pristine innocence, and all those who advance without any swerving in the paths of holiness, there is no tendency to yield to evil impressions. Of course the susceptibility of feeling them is there, otherwise they would not be responsible; but the tendency of yielding to them is not there, this has come through the Fall. When the evil spirit assailed Christ, Christ's nature felt his demon touch, but He resisted it. "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." On innocence the "fiery darts" of the devil fall as on water, and are quenched; on depravity they fall as on tinder, and become a blaze. The expression shows—

Thirdly: The possibility of the two uniting in a common crime. Both now acted jointly in the betrayal of Christ. The suggestion perhaps came from the one, the execution from the other. Two remarks may be offered on this subject—(1.) The unity of action *might not have sprung from exactly the same motives*. It does not appear that Judas had any positive hatred towards Christ; on the whole, perhaps, he was interested in Him, and his sympathies were on His side. Not so with Satan: this evil spirit seems to have had a burning dislike to Christ, hence we hear him exclaim at one time, "I know Thee who Thou art: art Thou come to torment me before the time?" The two are constitutional antagonists, in nature, in sympathy, and in purpose. (2.) The unity of action *did not lessen the responsibility of either*. Though Judas was instigated by Satan, yet Judas was *free*: of his freedom in the

action he was conscious. Hence, after the crime, how deep and intense was his remorse! "Then Judas, which had betrayed Him, when he saw that He was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself." In this paragraph we have—

II.—A GREAT CHARACTER INFINITELY CONDESCENDING.

Look here at two things—

First: See what this great character really was. He was One into Whose hands "*the Father had given all things,*" Who had "*come from God, and went to God.*" He was Divine in His authority, which was universal, and Divine in His mission and destiny. "*Come from God, and went to God.*" Of this He was profoundly conscious. "*Jesus knowing.*"

Secondly: See what He was actually doing. "*He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded.*" He does the work of a slave with the towel of a slave. Here is an illustration of that wonderful passage in the writings of the Apostle Paul (Phil. ii. 6—8): "Who, being in the form of God; did not think equality with God a thing to be grasped at; but emptied Himself by taking upon Him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself, having become obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross" (*Dr. Samuel Davidson*). In this paragraph we have—

III.—A GREAT TRUTH SYMBOLICALLY EXPRESSED.

What is the truth expressed by this washing of the disciples' feet? It is this, that *in the spiritual kingdom of Christ, to be truly humble is to be truly great.* That in His kingdom the lowest kind of service, if properly rendered, is sublimely dignified. The disciples had just been striving amongst themselves as to who should be the greatest. In answer to this, Christ had said, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them: and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so. But he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger: and he that is chief as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth." And here by a symbolic action He further illustrates the statement. True humility is true greatness, and the lowest services properly rendered are Divinely dignified. Observe two things—

First: Christ's idea of greatness condemns the general conduct of mankind. In the kingdoms of the world, men are considered great in proportion to their wealth and their influence. Hence, to break down the individual independency of men and reduce them to mere instruments to be wielded at pleasure, has ever been the aim and effort of the ambitious and the proud. The antithesis of this is true greatness. Its measure is not determined by the numbers that servilely attend on us, but rather by the numbers that we benevolently attend upon. Its mission is to minister, not to master: to give, not to govern. Its sceptre is love, not force, its throne is in the heart and its empire over souls. Observe—

Secondly: Christ's idea of greatness agrees with the moral reason of our nature. The greatness of Christ—Who “made Himself of no reputation,” Who gave Himself to save the world—and the greatness of Paul, is the greatness which commends itself to the unsophisticated reason of the world. He that “humbleth himself” to do good is “exalted” in the estimation of universal conscience. Disinterestedness is the soul of greatness. Observe—

Thirdly: Christ's idea of greatness was startling even to His disciple. “*Peter saith unto Him, Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?*” Peter could not suppose for a moment, that He Whom he regarded as Master and Lord—that He Whom he expected would restore Jerusalem and build up a kingdom that should make the Jews everywhere a free and triumphant people—would condescend to do the work of a slave and to wash the feet of His guests. He could not see greatness in that. Hence, startled, he exclaims, “*Dost Thou wash my feet?*” To this our Saviour replies, “*What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.*” * As if He had said, Wait a little, and thou shalt know the doctrine of true greatness.

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. XLIX.

EXISTING IGNORANCE AND APPROACHING KNOWLEDGE.

“What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.”—xiii. 7.

The special reference here is to Peter; and the promise of future knowledge was fulfilled in his own experience. Let us look at the words in a wider application.

I.—THEY INDICATE THE EXISTING IGNORANCE OF THE GOOD.

There is much that the best man knows not now.

First: There is much in nature he knows not now. How little does the most scientific man know of the substances, lives, laws, operations, extent of the universe! How deeply did Sir Isaac Newton feel his ignorance!

* See Germ, below.

Secondly : There is much in moral government he knows not now. The reason for the introduction of sin, the suffering of innocence, the prosperity of the wicked, the afflictions of the good, the tardy march of Christianity, is wrapped in utmost obscurity.

Thirdly : There is much in Divine revelation he knows not now. What Peter said of Paul's writings, we feel to be true of the whole Book. There are "many things hard to be understood." There are discrepancies that we cannot remove, there are doctrines that transcend our intelligence, towering high above our reason as the heavens above the earth.

Fourthly : There is much in his own experience he knows not now. Why should he be dealt with as he is ? Why such alternations of sorrow and joy, friendship and bereavement, health and sickness ? Why such conflicting elements in his nature ? Thus a thick cloud of darkness covers man's intellectual heavens, narrows his horizon, and renders the things most near at hand almost too obscure even for a superficial recognition.

II.—THEY INDICATE THE APPROACHING KNOWLEDGE OF THE GOOD.

"*Thou shalt know hereafter.*" This implies that there is a "*hereafter*" for man, and that that hereafter will be a sphere of knowledge. "*Thou shalt know hereafter.*" There will be—(1.) Sufficient *time* for knowing. (2.) Sufficient *facilities* for knowing.—All existing obstructions will be removed, and the immeasurable field of truth wide open under a never-clouded and a never-setting sun.

No. XCVI.

CHRIST WASHING HIS DISCIPLES' FEET. (No. 2).

"Peter saith unto Him, Thou shalt never wash my feet," &c —xiii. 8—11.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 8.—"*Peter saith unto Him, Thou shalt never wash my feet.*" Again the self-will of the apostle develops into contradiction and disobedience, as on the occasion when Jesus announced that He was about to tread the path of suffering (Matt. xvi. 22). The connection between the two passages is discoverable, on the one hand, in the great attachment and reverence which Peter entertained for the Lord ; but on the other hand also in his cleaving to the external glory and sovereignty of Christ, and in coveting a share thereof for himself. Christ now began practically with His self-humiliation to turn Peter's moral view of the world "upside down." "Peter, meanwhile, instead of divining

the blessing of the Cross enfolded in this act, struggled with anxious forebodings against its pricks. Christ's washing of the disciples' feet was an affair utterly repugnant to his soul. Never : properly to eternity, with the æon, *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*."—*Lange*. The emphasis here is not to be on the "*Thou*" or the "*my*," but on the "*never*." "The incidental touches of character, where individual apostles are named in this gospel, are in striking agreement with the more fully-drawn character of the other evangelists ; and the value of their evidence for the authorship cannot be overestimated. They are perfectly artless, but are beyond the most consummate art. He feels that it is the loving, impulsive, but self-confident Peter of

the earlier gospels who is speaking here. He does not wait for that after-knowledge which our Lord promises him. He sees no ground on which our Lord's act can possibly be one which he can permit." "*Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me.*" That Christ meant His act to be symbolic of the spirit of self-sacrifice and humility, in opposition to the spirit of self-seeking and pride, is here manifest. What He means is, If I do not impart to thee this spirit of self-sacrifice and humility, thou "*hast no part with Me.*" Christ's spirit of self-sacrifice is the soul-cleansing element, the washing of regeneration.

Ver. 9.—"*Simon Peter saith unto Him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.*" Peter has not yet penetrated the meaning of that symbolic act, nor rightly interpreted the words that had just been spoken to him. He does not understand what this washing means; but inasmuch as Christ has said that, unless he submits to it, He will cease to have any further connection with him, his loving and impulsive nature prompts him to yield whatever Christ commands. "*Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head;*" as if he had said, I will submit to anything Thou commandest, rather than forfeit my connection with Thee.

Ver. 10.—"*Jesus saith to him, He that is washed (R. V. BATHED) needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.*" "This answer," says Godet, "has naturally a double meaning. As in His conversation with the Samaritan woman, He passed with a rapid transition from the material to the spiritual. Just as one who, having bathed in the morning, considers

himself clean, and does not repeat this total ablution at meal-time, but is contented with washing his feet on entering, to remove such accidental defilement as he may have contracted by the way; so he who, by sincerely attaching himself to Christ, has found pardon for his sins, needs nothing else than a daily and continual purification from the moral defilement of which he becomes conscious during the course of his life. Peter was clean, because he sincerely believed in Christ. The purpose, then, of what Jesus was now doing for him was, not to reconcile him to God, but to remove from him, by such an example of humility, that particular defilement, the desire for earthly power and greatness, which Jesus at that very moment observed in His own. With this evil tendency Peter could not labour in the work of God, nor even sit down one day at the table of Christ." "*He that is washed*"—better, he that has been bathed. "*λούσθαι*, in contradistinction from *νίπτειν*, signifies, not washing, but bathing, and refers therefore to the purification of the entire body, and not of a portion merely." A man whose whole body has been bathed in water is clean all over, "*every whit*," and need not have any particular part cleansed. Peter need not, therefore, have requested his feet, hands, and head washed, if he had been thoroughly bathed. If the whole has been done, every part has been done; if the soul is saturated with self-sacrificing love, every part of the soul is so cleansed.

Vers. 10, 11.—"*And ye are clean, but not all. For He knew who (R. V. HIM THAT) should betray Him; therefore said He, Ye are not all clean.*" This is the first reference to the betrayal during the feast (Matt. xxi. 18).

HOMILETICS.

The subject of these words is *Christ washing His disciples' feet*, and the verses suggest to us five topics worthy of meditation—

I.—THE MIXTURE OF EVIL IN THE EXPERIENCE OF THE GOOD.

Peter, on the whole, was a good man; and his language, "*Thou shalt never wash my feet,*" expresses something that was really good.

The feeling that came out on another occasion, "Depart from me : for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke v. 8), implying the sense of Christ's greatness and his own unworthiness, is expressed here. Just before, as Christ approached him, he exclaims, "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?" Every word is emphatic. *Thou*, Son of the living God! *My* feet. I, a poor, worthless man! "*Thou shalt never wash my feet.*" I cannot allow it. Thy condescension overwhelms me. This is good. But associated with this there is some amount of evil. There is the want of reflection. His characteristic impulsiveness shows itself. There is the want of ready acquiescence. He ought to have felt such unbounded confidence in Christ as to submit to His wish without any reluctance. Thus, see how evil mixes with the best things within us. The subject suggests—

II.—THE NECESSITY OF SPIRITUAL CLEANSING.

When Peter, from a mistaken humility, refused to have his feet washed, Christ says, "*If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me.*" Spiritual cleansing is the great want of man. This will appear from two facts. (1.) Divine fellowship is essential to happiness. The true happiness of all spiritual intelligences consists in a loving fellowship with their great Father. (2.) Spiritual purity is essential to Divine fellowship. "The pure in heart alone shall see the Lord." "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Spiritual cleansing, then, is the great want of the world. Hence the command of God is, "Wash you, make you clean," &c. The prayer of good men is, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." The words show two things concerning this spiritual cleansing, so essential to the race.

First: It is pre-eminently the work of Christ. The application of water to the disciples' feet now, symbolizes the fact that it was His great work to cleanse men of their sins. "*If I wash thee not.*" I must wash thee: this is My work. This is Christ's work. His blood—His self-sacrificing love—alone "cleanseth from all sin." He receives the praises of eternity for this cleansing work of His. "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us."

Secondly: It extends to the whole life of man. "*Simon Peter saith unto Him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.*" Literally, the words mean, Your hands and your head, Peter, have been already washed in the bath (it was customary to take a bath before supper), you only need now to have the dust that has since gathered on your feet taken off. Spiritually, it means, Those who have been truly regenerated, as you have, still need the cleansing of some part of their life: the cleansing of the feet from defilements in the walk of common life. Though a man is regenerated, he is not perfect: every day brings its defilements, and every day

requires its purifications. At that table on this occasion there were (a) The *perfectly* clean. This was Christ. (β) The *partially* clean. These were the disciples: the vital parts of their natures had been cleansed, but the extremities, their feet, still required washing. (γ) The entirely *unclean*. This was Judas. The subject suggests—

III.—THE POSSIBILITY OF A RIGHT FEELING LEADING TO EVIL.

The humility of Peter on this occasion was right, but through his want of reflection it led him to oppose Christ. A sense of our own unworthiness, and of God's greatness, right in itself, may, and often does, lead to wrong results.

First: Some reject the doctrine of *Christ's mediation* from this feeling. So deeply do they profess to feel the worthlessness of human nature, and the greatness of God, that they refuse to believe that the Maker of the great universe sent His Son into this little planet to die for a world of rebellious worms.

Secondly: Some reject the doctrine of *God's personal providence* from this feeling. There are some who say that God is too great, man too little, to render it credible that He should superintend the affairs of individual men. The great God has only to do with the great.

Thirdly: Some reject *Christian consolation* from this feeling. Many devout souls in suffering refuse to apply to their own use the promises of God from a sense of their own unworthiness. Thus a right feeling for the lack of intelligent reflection may lead to evil results. The subject suggests—

IV.—THE RAPIDITY WITH WHICH THE SOUL CAN PASS INTO OPPOSITE SPIRITUAL MOODS.

At one moment we hear Peter exclaim, "*Thou shalt never wash my feet,*" and the next, "*Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.*" What a bound! We are all conscious of this power of rapid change—some temperaments more than others, still all have it.

First: This power indicates the greatness of human nature. We know of no other creature on earth that can pass through such changes. All irrational creatures move in a rut from which they cannot go. Man has a power to defy time and space, to live in the future, and to revel in the distant. "I knew a man in Christ fourteen years ago, whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth."

Secondly: This power shows the necessity for human reflection. If men reflect not, they will be ever at the mercy of external influences. Thoughtless men of impulse are like feathers on the wind; they are the sport of circumstances. The subject suggests—

V.—THE NECESSITY OF AN INCREASE OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE
FOR PERFECTION IN CHARACTER.

What brought Peter from the wrong to the right mood of soul? New light. After Christ had said, "*If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me,*" he exclaimed, "*Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.*" Just before, Jesus had said to him, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." He was in the dark when he said, "*Thou shalt never wash my feet.*" A new light had dawned on him when he said, "*Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.*" More light from heaven. More light: this is what we want: let us "follow on to know the Lord." Knowledge.

No. XCVII.

WHAT CHRIST REQUIRES OF HIS DISCIPLES.

"So after He had washed their feet, and had taken His garments, and was set down again, He said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?" &c.—xiii. 12—17.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 12.—"So after (R. V. WHEN) *He had washed their feet, and had taken His garments, and was set* (R. V. SAT) *down again.*" That is, when He placed Himself in the reclining position which was customary among the Jews at meals (Luke xi. 37; xxii. 14; John vi. 10; xxi. 20). "*He said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?*" That is, Do you understand the spiritual meaning of My conduct in washing your feet?

Ver. 13.—"*Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.*" Here begins the explanation. The word "*Master*" refers to His position as their Teacher: the word "*Lord*," to the reverence which they paid Him. You profess to recognize Me as your Teacher and Lord, and so I am. I claim to be that.

Ver. 14.—"*If I then, your* (R. V. THE) *Lord and* (R. V. THE) *Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.*" The argument is *à fortiori*. If I have humbled Myself to do the work of a servant

for you, how much more ought you to humble yourselves to serve one another!

Ver. 15.—"*For I have given you an example, that ye* (R. V. ALSO) *should do as I have done to you.*" This does not mean that they were to copy His action, but to inbreathe His spirit. The example is in the inner principle, not in the overt act.

Ver. 16.—"*Verily, verily, I say unto you, The* (R. V. A) *servant is not greater than his lord; neither he* (R. V. ONE) *that is sent greater than he that sent him.*" (See Matt. x. 24; Luke vi. 40; John xv. 20.)

Ver. 17.—"*If ye know these things, happy* (R. V. BLESSED) *are ye if ye do them.*" What things? The things He had taught them in verses 13 to 16. The greatness of humility, the duty of rendering loving service to the poorest, and the obligation to imitate Christ, are the "*things*." These things may be known and not be performed; but in the practical development of them is true happiness alone found.

HOMILETICS.

These verses serve to illustrate what *the conduct of Christ's disciples should be*; and they teach us four things in relation to it.

I.—IT SHOULD BE INTELLIGENT.

“So after He had washed their feet, and had taken His garments, and was set down again, He said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?” Virtually the question is, Do you know the meaning and intent of this act of Mine? He does not propound the question in order to get from them an answer at once, but to draw their attention to it, and to impress them with the fact that it had a meaning, and that meaning they should understand. Sometimes the actions of men have *no* meaning; they are impulsive and purposeless. Sometimes they have a *bad* meaning; they have selfish and sensual aims. Sometimes they have a *good* meaning; they are benevolent and pure in their motives. Christ’s actions *always* had a meaning. There was nothing purposeless in what He did; and His acts had always a good meaning, holy and beneficent. The duty of His disciples is, to *find out* their meaning, and therefore, as Christians, always to act intelligently. There are two classes of professed Christians who act wrongly in this respect.

First: Those who attach *no* meaning to Christ’s works. When they are brought under their notice, they may receive an impression of their outward form and the circumstances connected with them; but as to the eternal idea that underlies them and beats through them all, this they never reach, and seldom attempt to reach. Another class is—

Secondly: Those who attach a *wrong* meaning to Christ’s works. What absurd, and in some cases blasphemous, ideas are current in Christendom concerning many of the works which Christ wrought when on this earth! Now, in opposition to this, it is the duty of every man who names the name of Christ to endeavour to penetrate the meaning of His deeds, and to act accordingly. Christians should be intelligent in their conduct, should “prove all things,” and hold fast that which is true; be always prepared to give a reason for the “hope that is in them.” To act from blind impulse, from superstitious passions, from old customs and prejudices, is to act unchristianly. Another thing in relation to this conduct which is taught here is—

II.—IT SHOULD BE CONSISTENT.

“Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet.” The idea is this, If I, Who, according to your own profession—and your profession in this case is true—am so superior to you as to be your “Master and Lord,” condescend to wash your feet, is it not reasonable and right in you to engage in such lowly work? If I, Who am the Lord of

all, am not degraded by it, can you esteem it unworthy of your humble position? The general principle suggested is, that *Christ's disciples should act consistently with their professions*. There should be a perfect harmony between what they profess to be and what they are. Let creed and conduct be agreed; "live as becometh the Gospel of Christ." The discrepancy between the creed and the conduct of Christendom is at once amongst its greatest crimes and curses. Look into our own country as an example, and what do we see? The millions by profession calling Christ Master and Lord, and yet in daily life denying His doctrines and disobeying His will. He denounces war, they practise it; He denounces worldliness, they practise it; He denounces selfishness, they practise it; He denounces subjection to the flesh, they practise it. Thus—

With lip they call Him Master,
In life oppose His word;
They every day deny Him,
And yet they call Him Lord.

No more is their religion
Like His, in soul or deed,
Than painted grain on canvas
Is like the living seed.

We extol the Reformation from Popery to Protestantism, but that Reformation is not half so important nor half so necessary, as the reformation from Protestantism to the *true* Gospel, from conventional Christianity to the Christliness of Christ. Another thing in relation to this conduct which is taught here is—

III.—IT SHOULD BE CHRISTLY.

"For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." Do what? Not the exact special bodily work I have now done in washing your feet, but do what is practised in the spirit and embodied in the act, the spirit of disinterested self-abnegating humility. Some fools have thought, and still think, that they obey this precept of Christ by washing the feet of one another. In the Popish Church it is made a sacrament, and the Pope washes the feet of twelve beggars every year; and even in the Moravian fraternity such a ceremony seems to have been practised. What Claudius has said of ceremonies that are empty, may be said of this, "They are the little flags which reach forth over the water, and mark where a ship with her rich lading has sunk." To do in spirit as Christ did, is to follow His example. It may be possible for a man to speak all the words that another has ever uttered, to perform all the actions that another has ever performed, and yet to be essentially different. Were we to do all that Christ ever did, we may still be out of harmony—aye, and in antagonism—with His spirit. The only way to imitate His

example, is to imbibe His spirit; for if “any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” The way for a student artist to become like a great painter, is not to copy most accurately all the strokes and shadings of his model, but to catch the genius that inspired the master. With that genius—though he produced no painting exactly like his ideal—he may produce others of equal, if not superior, excellence. Christ’s spirit is the genius of all works of moral beauty and excellence; and if we catch that, we shall be “fruitful unto all good works.” Another thing in relation to this conduct which is taught here is—

IV.—IT SHOULD BE HAPPY.

“*Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.*” The first clause is a self-evident proverb, it is the last that deserves remark—“*happy are ye if ye do them.*” What things? Things that grow out of the spirit embodied in this conduct of Mine. It is implied here that you may know them, and yet not do them. And it is stated, if you know them and do them you will be happy. Observe—

First: That Christ desires the happiness of His disciples. “*These words have I spoken unto you, that your joy may be full.*” “He came that we might have life [or happiness], and that we might have it more abundantly.” Those who profess His name and are gloomy, discontented, murmuring, are an offence to Him, a misrepresentation of Him—are not His. To them He says, “I know you not.” His religion is designed and fitted to inspire the highest joy—“Joy unspeakable and full of glory.” Observe—

Secondly: That the doing in love the things of His loving heart ensures true happiness. “*Happy are ye if ye do them.*” The labour of love is the music of life. Yes; whatever the labour may be—whether it be the washing of disciples’ feet, penetrating the foul dungeons of prisoners, or visiting the hospitals of the sick and the dying—happiness is the outcome of all. Love is happiness.

No. XCVIII.

A FOURFOLD THEME.

“I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen,” &c.—xiii. 18—20.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 18.—“*I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen.*” The pronoun *I* is emphatic: I, for My part, know whom I have chosen. The chosen included Judas as well as the rest, for in chap. vi. 70 we have these words, “Have not

I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?” “*That the Scripture may be fulfilled.*” “Wonder not that one has been introduced into your number who is none of Mine. It is by no accident; there is no mistake; it is just that He might fulfil His predicted

destiny." "*He that eateth* (R. V. MY) *bread with Me*"—"that did eat of My bread" (Ps. xli. 9), as one of My family; admitted to the nearest familiarity of discipleship and of social life. "*Hath lifted up his heel against Me*"—turned upon Me, adding insult to injury. (Comp. Heb. x. 29.) In the Psalm the immediate reference is perhaps to Ahithophel's treachery against David (2 Sam. xvii.). "The eating bread," says *Stier* (with whom, as with others who hold that Judas partook of the Lord's Supper, we agree), "derives a fearful meaning from the participation in the Sacramental Supper, a meaning which must be applied for ever to all unworthy communicants, as well as to all betrayers of Christ who eat the bread of His Church" (*Dr. Brown*).

Ver. 19.—"*Now* (R. V. FROM HENCEFORTH) *I tell you before it come* (R. V. TO PASS), *that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am He.*" Christ knew that when one of their

number—one whom He had chosen—should prove treacherous and betray Him, their own faith might be shaken in Him as the Messiah, and that He would be crushed under the traitorous act of a pretended friend. Hence He forewarns them, and fortifies them against the coming shock.

Ver. 20.—"*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me.*" "The connection here seems to be, that, despite the dishonour done to Him by Judas, and similar treatment awaiting themselves, they were to be cheered by the assurance that their office, even as His own, was Divine." The words spoken when they were called to be apostles—though one of their number would fall—would still hold true. Their honour and encouragement as apostles are in the fact that they are apostles from Him as He is an Apostle from the Father.

HOMILETICS.

We have here a *fourfold theme* for thought—a solemn truth, a lamentable fact, a beneficent warning, and a glorious assurance. Here is—

I.—A SOLEMN TRUTH.

"*I know whom I have chosen.*" Christ knows His disciples, knows both the true and the false. He not only knows their works, but knows their hearts. We are told that He "knew what was in man;" and that He knew from the beginning who they were who believed not, and who would betray Him. In the Apocalypse He says, "I am He that searcheth the reins and hearts." And to the seven Churches He says, "I know thy works." He knows all that we have been, all that we are, and what we shall be through all the centuries of our future. The fact that Christ knows His disciples may lead us to infer—

First: That He does not require from us what will out-measure our faculties. He loves us too much; nay, He is too just in Himself to do this. He only demands what is equal to our powers. He is not a "hard Master, reaping where He has not sown." We infer—

Secondly: That the services that are not rendered to Him from the heart are of no worth in His sight. Formality and insincerity are worse than worthless; they are sinful, and expose to His righteous indignation. We infer—

Thirdly : That every one that names His name should depart from evil. Let us strip ourselves of all hypocrisies and pretensions, knowing that all things are “naked and open to the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do.” In human service inner motives go for little. The employer does not concern himself with the spirit of his *employees*, but with their labours, whether they are profitable or not. He will pay the man who is successful in the work which he has set him to do, though he may know that the man in his heart cares nothing for him. On the other hand, he will discharge from his service the man whose work is of no value to him, even although he knows that he loves him. In sublime contrast to this, is Christ’s estimate of labour in His service. It is not the amount of outward work done, but the amount of inward love felt. “Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And I shall say, Depart from Me, I never knew you”—never approved of your works.

“The painted hypocrites are known
Through the disguise they wear ;
Nothing but truth before His throne
In honour can appear.”

Mark, Christ is here said to have chosen the twelve, including Judas. Good reasons could be assigned (which we have elsewhere noticed) for His choosing Judas as a member of His circle. There are men who build their assurance of heaven at last upon persuading themselves that they are amongst the chosen ; but Judas was “*chosen*” and was damned. Here is—

II.—A LAMENTABLE FACT.

“*That the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that catcheth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me.*” Whatever may be the meaning of the expression, “*that the Scripture may be fulfilled,*” it cannot be entertained for a moment, that Judas betrayed Him in order to fulfil the Scripture. In the first place, there is no proof that the Scripture quoted was a prophecy at all ; in the second place it is not quoted accurately ; and in the third place the writer states a fact in his own history of some one whom he had served—a professed friend who had proved false and traitorous. That Judas should have acted thus, is, we say, a lamentable fact, lamentable because it involves—(1.) *The basest ingratitude.* How kind Christ had been to him in taking him into His circle ! It involves—(2.) *The guiltiest avarice.* The lowest greed was the inspiration of his act. “What will ye give me?” It involves—(3.) *The most daring impiety.* Well he must have known that Christ was more than a man. His Divinity was

manifest in His mien, His spirit, His work. Notwithstanding this, Judas betrays Him. Such a fact as this—

First: Shows a possibility that should lead us all to the most rigorous heart scrutiny. Here we see that a man may be in close contact with Christ, live in intimate association with Him for three long years, be impressed by His wonderful words and superhuman bearing, and yet have no vital spiritual connection with Him. Well may we all ask, "Lord, is it I?" Such a fact—

Secondly: Shows that Christ coerces no man into His service. He leaves each of His disciples to act for himself. "Will ye also go away?" Here is—

III.—A BENEFICENT WARNING.

"Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am He."

First: The warning here was against a probable danger to the other disciples. Had the conduct of Judas broken suddenly on them, the probability is, they would have received a moral shock that would go far to shake their faith. When they saw Him betrayed into the hands of the Roman ruffians by one of their own number, would it not be natural for them to conclude that their Master was overwhelmed and crushed, and that all their hopes of His being a triumphant Messiah were at an end? But this warning would prepare them for it.

Secondly: The warning here would make the very betrayal the means of fortifying their faith in the Messiah. Feeling that the betrayal was only the fulfilment of His word, they would feel that His very forecast was an additional proof of His Messiahship. The warning was therefore beneficent; to be forewarned is to be forearmed. All Christ's warnings were of this character. Here is—

IV.—A GLORIOUS ASSURANCE.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me." He assures them that,—

First: His faithful disciples were identified with Him. *"He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth Me."* The treatment they receive, whether considerate, generous, or otherwise, I take as being rendered to Me. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." "Why persecutest thou Me?"

Secondly: His faithful disciples were identified with Him as He was identified with His Father. (1.) By official work. Ambassadors. As He represented the Father, they were to represent Him. (2.) By a vital sympathy. They are to be one with Him—one in feeling, spirit, purpose, work.

No. XCIX.

CHRIST IN SADNESS, THE DISCIPLES IN ANXIETY, AND THE TRAITOR UNMASKED.

(*Jesus points out the traitor—Judas withdraws—Jerusalem.*—MATT. xxvi. 21—25; MARK xiv. 18—21; LUKE xxii. 21—23; JOHN xiii. 21—35.)

"When Jesus had thus said, He was troubled in spirit," &c.—xiii. 21—30.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—"In this paragraph we have the detection and dismissal of Judas. We have another work performed by Jesus from love to His disciples. So long as Judas was present, His feelings were under restraint, and He could not give free course to the Divine treasures with which His mind was filled. Ver. 31 vividly expresses the feeling of relief which He experienced at seeing the traitor depart; and it was then that those full effusions of His inmost heart contained in chaps. xiv.—xvii. took place. These last moments of friendly intercourse were necessary to our Lord's work. In the circle of the twelve, Judas had been the representative of that spirit of carnality which was directly opposed to that which Jesus had just sanctioned by washing the disciples' feet. If he would not humble himself and renounce this spirit, he must depart; and it was the spirit of the false, of the Jewish Messiah, of Antichrist, which departed with him."—*Godet*.

Ver. 21.—"*When Jesus had thus said, He was troubled in (R. V. THE) spirit, and testified.*" "His higher nature became agitated with a mysterious sorrow, agitated as the troubled sea. The inmost life of His human spirit was invaded by horror at the unprecedented fact of His approaching and imminent betrayal. The sight of the crafty one, and of his connection with the circle of disciples, most of whom were without suspicion of his guilt, and had trusted implicitly to his fidelity, tempted Him to despise the whole race of mankind, and tended to produce in Him an exasperation of spirit which He must summon all His energies to resist."—*Lange*. "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me.*" Who shall tell the

agony of spirit in the discovery and the disclosure of this fact? The awful secret is out now. Perhaps His frame was convulsed, His lips quivered, and His eyes wept tears as He proclaimed this terrible fact.

Ver. 22.—"*Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom He spake.*" In Matthew it is said that they were exceedingly sorrowful at this dreadful moment (xxvi. 22). Luke says they began to inquire among themselves which of them it was that should do this dreadful thing (xxii. 23). And Mark says they began to say unto Him, one by one, "Is it I?" (xiv. 19.) But whilst all the others asked the question, each perhaps in his turn, was Judas silent? Could he brave singularity? No. Judas last of all answered and said, "Lord, is it I?" To this Christ responded, "Thou hast said" (Matt. xxvi. 24, 25). Heart-searching, awful hour this!

Ver. 23.—"*Now there was leaning on (R. V. THERE WAS AT THE TABLE RECLINING IN) Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.*" As Jesus certainly loved all the eleven, this must mean a peculiarly dear love which Jesus had for John (comp. chap. xi. 3, 4, of Lazarus). "Once and again does our Evangelist thus denote himself. Doubtless it was on account of this love that Jesus placed him next to Himself in His own 'bosom' at the table. But it is alluded to here to explain the facility which he had from his position of asking his Lord quietly what He meant."—*Brown*. "This is the moment," says *Rev. W. Watkins*, "which has been caught in Leonardo da Vinci's famous masterpiece in the refectory of the Dominican Fathers at Milan. The painting itself has almost passed away, but, perhaps, no work of art is so widely known,

The three apostles mentioned in the text are all on the right of our Lord. John is nearest to Him, and leaning towards Peter, who stretches behind Judas to speak to 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.' Judas, clutching the bag and upsetting the salt, declaring in every feature of that wondrous face—which cost Da Vinci a whole year's study in the lowest quarter of the city—that he is the traitor, is on the right hand of John, and between him and Peter. This verse can have no better comment than a study of this great picture, accompanied by the chapter in Lanzi's 'Storia Pittorica,' or Mrs. Jameson's 'Sacred and Legendary Art,' would provide; and Englishmen have a noble copy of it in their own National Gallery. But Leonardo's picture is in one respect misleading, and, like most paintings of the Lord's Supper, has not represented the method in which the guests reclined rather than sat at table. Each leaned on his left arm, leaving the right arm free. The feet were stretched out behind the guest on his right hand, and the back of his head reached near to the bosom of the guest on his left. The Jews followed this Persian method of reclining on couches at meals from the time of the Captivity; and this method of eating the Passover had the special significance and security and possession of the Promised Land, as opposed to the attitude of one undertaking a journey, which was part of the original institution (Exod. xii. 11)."

Ver. 24.—"*Simon Peter therefore beckoned* (R. V. BECKONETH) *to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom He spake*" (R. V. SAITH UNTO HIM, TELL US WHOM IT IS OF WHOM HE SPEAKETH). The words are in the present tense in the original, and should therefore be translated, "Simon Peter beckons," that is, makes a sign. John and Peter were old friends. They had been disciples together of John the Baptist, and among the first who gave in their adherence to Christ, and we therefore may suppose their intercourse was pretty free. Peter makes a sign to him.

Ver. 25.—"*He then lying* (R. V.

LEANING BACK AS HE WAS) *on Jesus' breast saith unto Him, Lord, who is it?*" Let us know who is the man amongst us that is to betray Thee.

Ver. 26.—"*Jesus answered* (R. V. THEREFORE ANSWERETH), *He it is, to* (R. V. FOR) *whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it* (R. V. I SHALL DIP THE SOP AND GIVE IT HIM). *And* (R. V. SO) *when He had dipped the sop, He gave* (R. V. TAKETH AND GIVETH) *it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon*" (R. V. ISCARIOT). The sop was a piece of bread soaked in the wine; and the giving now of the sop to Judas answered John's question, and told him that Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, was the betrayer.

Ver. 27.—"*And after the sop* (R. V. THEN) *Satan entered into him.*" In a preceding verse we were told that the devil had already put it into his heart to betray his Lord; but now the Evil Spirit advances farther, enters into him, and takes possession of him, and gives full effect to his diabolic purpose. The hypocrite now stands exposed and self-committed. "*Then said Jesus* (R. V. JESUS THEREFORE SAITH) *unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.*" This may mean, "Away, i. e. begone, here thou art out of thy sphere;" or it may also mean, "I dare thee to do thy worst; do it quickly."

Vers. 28, 29.—"*Now no man at the table knew for what intent He spake this unto him. For some of them thought* (R. V. SOME THOUGHT), *because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those* (R. V. WHAT) *things that we have need of against* (R. V. FOR) *the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.*" This is the biographer's comment as he remembered the solemn scene and the impressions of that night.

Ver. 30.—"*He then having received the sop went immediately out* (R. V. OUT STRAIGHTWAY): *and it was night.*" "The words doubtless state the physical fact that at the time when Judas left the room the darkness of night had already come on. He went out, and went out into the darkness of night. We cannot say that the writer meant them to express more than

this; and yet we feel that there is in them a fulness of meaning that cannot have been unintentional. It was night, and he stepped forth from light into darkness, from the presence and guidance of the Light of the World, to be possessed by and guided by the

Prince of Darkness. It was night, and John could hardly have written these words without remembering those he had written but a short time before, 'If a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.'—*Ellicott's Commentary*.

HOMILETICS.

In these verses we have three things worthy of notice—*Christ in sadness, the disciples in anxiety, and the traitor unmasked*.

I.—CHRIST IN SADNESS.

"When Jesus had thus said, *He was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me.*" What was the spirit-trouble of Christ on this occasion? Though an answer to this question may be impossible, an attempt to realize it in some measure may not be unjustifiable or unuseful. We can safely predicate two things concerning it.

First: It was the distress of intense holiness in the presence of foul depravity. Holiness makes the soul intensely sensitive; and the more holy a man is, the more deeply grieved and pained is he at the discovery of the false and the vile. With the body, sometimes the optic nerve becomes so sensitive that the touch of the sunbeam will produce the greatest pain; and the auricular nerve so tender that the softest sound yields agony. And in some diseases the whole nervous system becomes so exquisitely tender that even a breath of air will throw the whole writhing frame into anguish. The whole moral being of Christ was rendered so exquisitely sensitive by His holiness, that every sin grieved Him to the heart. Now, with Judas under His eye, perhaps a shock of horror sent a quiver through all the nerves of His pure soul.

Secondly: It was the distress of the highest benevolence in the presence of a lost soul. The more love a being has in him, the more, by the law of sympathy, he feels and bears the sufferings of others. Christ's love was deep, tender, and immeasurable; and it brought on His great heart the woes of the world. He knew what a lost soul meant, He comprehended all the evils and miseries involved therein; and a lost soul stood before Him. We wonder not that He was "*troubled in spirit.*" In these verses we have—

II.—THE DISCIPLES IN ANXIETY.

When Christ said, "*One of you shall betray Me,*" all seemed startled into the deepest solicitude. "*Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom He spake. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.** Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom He

* See Germ. p. 399.

spake. *He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto Him, Lord, who is it?*" Matthew and Mark add to our information concerning the anxiety of the disciples, they were "exceeding sorrowful;" and they tell us, too, that every one of them put the question, "Is it I?" The question implies two things.

First: Self-suspicion. Had they been certain of their incapability to perpetrate such an enormity, they would not have made such an appeal. None of them had an undoubted confidence in his impeccability. This self-suspicion is well founded in all souls this side of the grave, and it is a help to our spiritual progress and safety. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." The question implies,

Secondly: A desire to know the worst. Cowardly natures close their eyes on the worst, and delude themselves with the idea that all is right. It is to the spiritual interest of every man to know the worst concerning himself here and now, for here and now the worst can be rectified. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." In these verses we have—

III.—THE TRAITOR UNMASKED.

Observe here four things—

First: The means of his detection. "*Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when He had dipped the sop, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.*" There is no reason for supposing that these words were spoken in an undertone to the beloved disciple who was leaning on Jesus' breast. The "*sop*" was a morsel of food dipped in the water in which the bitter herbs had been boiled, and always used at the Passover supper, and now on the table for use. Is it implied that Christ did not hand the sop round to others, or that after His words Judas was the first person to whom He gave the sop? Anyhow, the sop was given to Judas, and with that act the traitor stood unmasked. Observe—

Secondly: His domination by Satan. "*And after the sop Satan entered into him.*" Before this we read that Satan had put the wicked deed into his heart; now it would seem as if the infernal spirit entered and took possession of his soul. We are told that this evil spirit filled Ananias and Sapphira to lie, and he now filled Judas to betray Jesus. Observe—

Thirdly: His defiance by Christ. "*That thou doest, do quickly.*" As if Christ had said, "I dismiss thee forthwith, and I defy thee to do thy worst. There is no time to lose; quickly bring the infernal drama to a close, and let the curtain fall." It appears from the two following verses that none of the other disciples understood

what Christ meant by these words. “*Now no man at the table knew for what intent He spake this unto him,*” &c. (vers. 28, 29). They thought—as some provisions were still required to be made for the festival, and as Judas had the money, and the Sabbath was at hand, when there could be no merchandise—that Christ meant to say to Judas, “Go quickly, and procure the necessary supplies.” Observe—

Fourthly: His lamentable doom. “*He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.*” He obeyed the request of Christ, “*and went immediately out*”—out before the Lord’s Supper, which took place after the Paschal meal. “*And it was night.*” The night immediately preceding that day of the Crucifixion, when the Son of God suffered on the cross. It was the night in which, in the garden, he executed his diabolical purpose; it was the night of all the nights on earth, the darkest in his soul. Remorse swept all brightness from his sky, and mantled his being in the sackcloth of despair.

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. L.

FAMILIARITY WITH CHRIST.

“He then lying on Jesus’ breast saith unto Him, Lord, who is it?”—xiii. 25.

This remarkable incident reveals great *familiarity* with Christ—John leans on the Saviour’s bosom. Personal Christianity is an *intimate* connection with Christ. To be a true Christian is to be more familiar with Christ than with fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters.

I.—THIS FAMILIARITY INVOLVES THE MOST AMAZING CONDESCENSION.

Little magnates of earth deem it a great condescension to allow the humble and lowly to speak to them even at a distance. But here is the AUTHOR and PROPRIETOR of the universe, the Infinitely Holy as well as transcendently Great, permitting poor frail sinful man to lean on His bosom. “Though He is high, yet hath He respect unto the lowly.” The humblest soul is dear to Him.

First: Let this condescension *inspire us with adoring gratitude.*

Secondly: Let this condescension consume *that pride which prompts man to keep the poor at a distance.*

II.—THIS FAMILIARITY INVOLVES THE SUBLIMEST PRIVILEGE.

To be so closely allied to Christ as this, is to be in the safest and most honourable position. What honour to recline on the bosom of the “King of kings, and Lord of lords!” Paul said, “To

be with Christ is far better." Yes; to be with Christ is to be secure, joyous, and dignified.

III.—THIS FAMILIARITY INVOLVES THE PROFOUNDEST REVERENCE.

John addresses Christ as Lord. "*Lord, who is it?*" Familiarity with men, the proverb says, breeds contempt. We know it often breeds discontent. So imperfect are the best of men, that, as a rule, the more we know of them the less reverence we have. Not so familiarity with Christ; the more we know of Him, the profounder our reverence. "*Lord, who is it?*"

No. C.

THREE IMPORTANT FACTS IN RELATION TO CHRIST.

"Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him," &c.—xiii. 31—33.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Vers. 31, 32.—"*Therefore, when* (R. V. WHEN THEREFORE) *he was gone out, Jesus said* (R. V. SAITH), *Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him*" (R. V. SHALL GLORIFY HIM), &c. The traitor is gone; all breathe more freely; even Christ Himself feels a restraint removed; and He speaks with greater freedom and flow. Now from His lips there roll, clear as crystal, those rich streams of living and quickening truths which continue to flow during the whole of the supper, until He enters the last stage of His great work, the scene in the garden. Now that the betrayer is gone, and the little circle is united in truth and love, about what does Jesus speak? Does He make any reflections on the conduct of the traitor? No. Does He deplore the awful agonies that were about to break on Him and crush Him into the grave? No. His words are those of triumph. Five times in two sentences does He use the word "*glorify*." "The Son of man glorified," &c. His soul goes on to His triumph over the grave, His ascension to

heaven, His mediatorial reign, and all the ever-brightening glories of an interminable future.

Ver. 33.—"*Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek Me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to* (R. V. UNTO) *you*." Amidst thoughts of His own glory He does not forget the condition of His disciples, their state of orphanage and exposure to persecution when He shall have departed. Hence with exquisite tenderness He addresses them with the endearing title, "*little children*." These words, which John well remembered as coming from the lips of His Master, he frequently uses in his epistles (See 1 John ii. 1, 12, 28; iii. 7, 18; iv. 4; v. 21). Probably what Christ means here is, My bodily presence is about leaving you; very soon you will not see Me as you now see Me. I shall go to the Father, and shall be far beyond the reach of your senses. Though you seek for a view of Me then, you will not find Me; where I am—upon the throne of the universe—ye cannot come.

HOMELETICS.

There are in these verses *Three facts which we discover in relation to Christ.*

I.—A PAINFUL OPPRESSION REMOVED FROM HIS HEART.

“Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said.” With the departure of Judas, Jesus seems to have felt a relief.

First: An object of moral offence had been removed from His vision. In human experience it is never felt to be a pleasant thing to have in your social circle a corrupt man, still less one whom you know to have plotted against you. The exit of such a man is felt to be a relief. Christ must have felt somewhat thus now when Judas had departed. His presence had oppressed and pained Him.

Secondly: An obstruction to the free utterance of His love had been removed from amongst his hearers. Parents have often things to say to their children which they will not utter when a stranger is amongst them, still less when the stranger is an enemy. It is even so with Christian pastors, they have often something to say to their loving people, which the presence amongst them of a known enemy would restrain. All this Christ seems to have felt. The presence of Judas had oppressed His heart, and checked the free flow of His loving utterances to His disciples. The traitor has departed, His spirit is relieved and His tongue free. Another fact in relation to Christ which we discover in these verses is—

II.—A GLORIOUS CONSUMMATION OF THE GREAT PURPOSE OF HIS LIFE.

“Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him.” *“The Son of man.”* This expression occurs no less than sixty-six times in the Gospel histories. *“Son of man”*—not the Son of a tribe, otherwise He would have tribal idiosyncrasies; not the Son of a nation, otherwise He would have national peculiarities; not the Son of a sect, or He would have sectarian predilections and marks; but the *“SON OF MAN.”* He is a Man, realizing the Divine ideal of what a man is and what a man ought to be. Now this Son of man felt that the grand object of His mission here was so near realization that He exults in it as a consummation. *“Now is the Son of man glorified.”* Two remarks are here suggested—

First: *That the true glory of a man is the realization of the Divine purpose of his life.* Whatever existence realizes the Divine purpose, is thereby glorified. The bright heavens, the lovely landscapes, and mighty oceans, are glorious and glorified because they realize the Divine purpose. Thus “the heavens declare His glory.” The Gospel is glorified when it realizes its grand purpose with men by transforming them into the image of God. Thus the Apostle speaks of its having “free course and being glorified.” Man can only glorify God as he realizes in his life the Divine purpose concerning his creation.

Secondly : That the man who realizes the Divine purpose in his life, not only glorifies himself, *but glorifies God also*. The real glory of man and of God are identical. What really glorifies man, glorifies God. Where do we see most of the glory of God ? In the life of that man who works out the Divine will and develops the Divine purpose. Well then would it be for us all to remember, that we glorify God, not by endeavours to prove His existence, or illustrate His attributes, or vindicate the justness of His procedure to man, or by panegyriizing His name by singing psalms and offering prayers, but by living a *godlike life*—a life in which the grand purpose of God toward us is wrought out in living characters. This is what Christ felt now. His mission to the universe was about being realized, and He triumphantly exclaims, "*Now is the Son of man glorified.*" Another fact in relation to Christ which we discover in these verses is—

III.—A TENDER CONSIDERATION FOR THE COMING TRIAL OF HIS DISCIPLES.

"*Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek Me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go ye cannot come; so now I say to you.*" The great trial awaiting them was His departure from their midst. They had been with Him for three years. He had won their hearts, changed the whole current of their thoughts and sympathies; they had resigned their worldly avocations, renounced their old fellowships, and excited the flaming ire of their rulers and their countrymen on His account. So long as He was with them they were amply supplied and well guarded. But now He was about to leave them, and they would be left as sheep without a shepherd to the ravenous wolves of a ceremonious and an intolerant religion. Two days more, and Christ would be in His grave; and about seven weeks afterwards He would be away in the holy heavens beyond their ken. With tender consideration He here prepares them for this trial.

First: By informing them of it. "*Yet a little while I am with you.*" A trial that would crush us if it came suddenly and unexpectedly, may fall lightly if we have known of its approach, and realize it to some extent before it comes. Christ knew this, and thus He foretells them of His exit. He here prepares them for the trial—

Secondly: By informing them of it in language of endearment. "*Little children.*" You are My children; I speak to you with the tenderness of a Father; you are My little children, dear to Me as infants to their mother. How tender is Christ! He "carries the lambs in His arms, and gently leads those that are with young."

No. CI.

THE NEW COMMANDMENT, OR GENUINE ALTRUISM.

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another," &c.—
xiii. 34, 35.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 34.—
"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you." "This commandment is called new, not so much in relation to the Old Testament, as to the teaching of Christ, and to the new standard it sets up, viz. that love should go so far as even to make one lay down life for those one loves, or ought to love. (Compare 1 John iii. 16.) Thus the newness consists in adding, 'as I have loved you.' Hitherto to follow Jesus, step by step, had been the disciples' rule of conduct, and

this implied love; but now they could follow Him no longer, since He was leaving them; and therefore He lays before them a summary of duty. Compare, as to praying, chap. xvi. 24; as to calling them friends, chap. xv. 15; as to the hatred of the world, chap. xvi. 4. Hence the law of love is called the law of Christ, Gal. vi. 2."

Ver. 35.—"By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." Christly love is the mark, the only infallible mark, of genuine discipleship.

HOMILETICS.

The subject here is *The New Commandment, or Genuine Altruism*. Christ is the world's Monarch, the Prince of all the kings of the earth. All Christendom professes to regard Him as such. "Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." Now, what is the great law of this King of kings, the cardinal law, the law that should fashion all other laws, and that all are bound to obey? It is the law of *brotherly love*,—*altruism*. In relation to this law the words suggest three things.

I.—IT IS A NEW THING TO THE WORLD.

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you."* It is not new in its *essence* or objects; for the old law required that we should love our neighbour as ourselves. Its newness is in its rule or model, "*As I have loved you*." What was the character of Christ's love towards men? It was—

First: Absolutely disinterested. The love which man shows to man has in it generally, if not always, some amount of selfishness. There is in it the hope of some advantage. Not so with the love which Christ had for man. He had no personal interest to serve. Men could confer no benefit on Him; nor could their wrath, though it raged with the fury and force of hell, injure Him. His love towards men was—

Secondly: Unexcited by merit. The love of man for man has generally in it the recognition of some merit. Man is loved on account of some real or imaginary excellence, such as amiability, uprightness, intelligence, or trustfulness. But in man Christ saw nothing to merit His love. To His eye all men were corrupt,

* See Germ, p. 405.

hell-deserving, and enemies to Himself. He loved His enemies. His love towards man was—

Thirdly : Self-sacrificing in power. Man's love for man develops itself, for the most part, in warm conversation, in free inter-visitations, and in kindly offices, sometimes involving some amount of self-sacrifice. But Christ's love was a practical force, a force that urged on to the sacrifice of Himself. "He loved us, and gave Himself for us." "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die," &c. His love towards man was—

Fourthly : Essentially forgiving. His love was a forgiving love, for He loved His enemies. Even on the Cross He prayed for His murderers, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." Man's love for man has seldom in it the forgiving power to any great extent. One or two offences will destroy it and replace it by revenge. When Peter asked the question of our Lord, "How often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him, till seven times?" he thought that to forgive a man seven times was a wonderful display of love—a display that Christ would commend. But what was the reply? "I say not unto thee, until seven times : but until seventy times seven."

Here then is the "*new commandment*." Men are bound by the law of Christ to love their brethren with a love absolutely disinterested, entirely unmerited, practically self-sacrificing, and essentially forgiving. This kind of love is the great cardinal supreme law under which humanity is placed by Christ. In relation to this law the words suggest—

II.—IT IS A CRITERION OF DISCIPLESHIP.

"*By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples.*"

First : This is a simple test. Had the test been the adoption of a certain set of beliefs, or conformity to certain rites, it would have been too complicated to be of easy application or of practical use ; but here how simple ! The question is not, Do you believe in this or that ? Do you belong to this sect or that ? Do you attend to this rite or that ? but, Do you love your brother man as Christ loved him ? "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen ?"

Secondly : This is an infallible test. Other tests, even the best, are of doubtful accuracy ; their application may lead to wrong conclusions. But this is infallible. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so *fulfil* the law of Christ." It is the test which will determine the destiny of all men on the last day. Whether men on that day will rise to heavenly happiness or descend to hellish sadness, will be determined by their practical conduct towards their fellows while on this earth—whether they clothed the naked, visited the prisoner, &c. (Matt. xxv.).

Thirdly : This is a solemn test. If we apply it to the Christians

of this age and country, where men hate each other, cheat each other, fight each other, how few will be proved to be genuine disciples! Could all men stand this test, the human world would be a Paradise. In relation to this law the words suggest—

III.—IT IS THE PATH TO HEAVEN.

These words were uttered immediately after our Saviour had said, “Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you. *A new commandment*,” &c. The implication seems to be, if you obey this “*new commandment*” we shall meet again; you will reach the scenes whither I am going. True; the path of Christly love is the only path to heaven.

CONCLUSION.—Read, in connection with this subject, Paul’s chapter on charity, or love. That chapter is not only a glorious illustration, but a cogent enforcement of this law of love.

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

No. LI.

TRUE SOCIAL LOVE.

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.”—xiii. 34.

These words lead us to consider *true social love*, the love that men ought to have for their fellow-creatures.

I.—ITS MODEL.

How should man love his brother? Here is the answer—“*As I have loved you.*”

First: Initially. Christ loved man before man loved Him. “Herein is love; not that we loved Him, but that He loved us.” Because others do not love us, it is no excuse for not loving them.

Secondly: Practically. His love did not evaporate in sentiment, did not exhaust itself in speech. (1.) His love expressed itself in His works. In His life “He went about doing good.” (2.) His love expressed itself in His death. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” “Scarcely for a righteous man will one die.”

Thirdly: Constantly. His love is an everlasting love. “The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed,” &c. Thus we are to love each other. This is the model. We are not to hate men; we may hate their characters, but not their being. We are not to love them with a passing feeling, but with a practical affection.

These words lead us to consider—

II.—ITS OBLIGATION.

“*A new commandment I give unto you.*” It is a “*commandment*,” not a suggestion, not an advice. And it is a “*new commandment*.” How is it new?

First: It is new to the world's idea. *Plato*, in his "Republic," asked the question, If when a poor man is ill, whether it is our duty to help him? and the answer is *no*, because he is not worth the trouble. And *Celsus*, the famous antagonist to Christianity, declared that "it must be nothing short of madness to believe that Greeks, and barbarians, Europe, Asia, and Libya, can ever be united in the bond of a common religion." To "*love one another*" is a new idea. It had no residence in the brain of men of past times.

Secondly: It is new to the world's feeling. To love men as Christ loved them, was an affection which but very few of even the best of men of ancient times ever experienced.

Thirdly: It is new to the world's practice. Point me to any age preceding the Christian, where love built schools to educate the ignorant, infirmaries for the diseased, asylums for the poor, refuges for the destitute; or point me, even in modern times, to any part of heathendom where such institutions exist.

No. CII.

PETER'S INQUIRY AND IMPULSE, AND CHRIST'S RESPONSE AND CORRECTION.

(*Jesus foretells the fall of Peter and the Dispersion of the Twelve. Jerusalem.*—

MATT. xxvi. 31—35; MARK xiv. 27—31; LUKE xxii. 31—38; John xiii. 36—38.)

"Simon Peter said unto Him, Lord, whither goest Thou?" &c.—xiii. 36—38.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Ver. 36.—"*Simon Peter said* (R. V. SAITH) *unto Him.*" Peter speaks here; Thomas, Philip and Judas in chap. xiv. 5, 8—22; and all the disciples in chap. xvi. 29. The very conversations mentioned in chap. xiv. seem to indicate that Peter and John had not returned from making ready the Passover. Yet John seems to have had no more difficulty in describing them than Luke had in relating the particulars contained in the first chapter of his gospel. Who could undertake an exact setting forth of these colloquies, even had he heard or read them a hundred times? This power then was Divinely conferred on the sacred writers. But, supposing the conversation mentioned in chap. xiv. to have taken place *before* Peter and John went into the city, the remaining narrative remains undisturbed; but, in this case, the rest of the discourse must be separated from the short clause, "*Lord, whither goest Thou?*" Peter asked in the hope that he might follow. Peter's heart

clave to Jesus (chap. vi. 68; xxi. 7). "*Jesus answered him.*" Jesus answers the questions at intervals (chap. xiv. 2, 28; xvi. 5). "*Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now.*" Neither the state of the case nor the weakness of Peter permitted him; but it was the latter objection only to which the words referred. Peter did follow Jesus (chap. xviii. 15), but at a distance, and not unscathed (Matt. xvi. 58). "*But thou shalt follow Me afterwards.*" (R. V. OMITTS THE LAST 'ME.') (Chap. xxi. 19—22.)

Ver. 37.—"*Peter said* (R. V. SAITH) *unto Him, Lord, why cannot I follow Thee* (R. V. EVEN) *now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake*" (R. V. THEE). Here is Peter, impulsive Peter, true to his nature, warm, emotional, unguarded. I have no doubt that he was sincere in this avowal.

Ver. 38.—"*Jesus answered him* (R. V. ANSWERETH), *Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake?*" (R. V. ME.) Some have seen irony in these words

of Christ. I know thee better; thou art deceiving thyself. "*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.*" Lay down thy life for Me! Thou

wilt not so much as confess Me; but before the cock crows on the approaching day thou shalt deny Me thrice.

HOMILETICS.

These verses bring under our notice, *Peter's inquiry and Christ's response, Peter's impulse and Christ's correction.*

I.—PETER'S INQUIRY AND CHRIST'S RESPONSE.

Two remarks here—

First: The inquiry was natural. "*Simon Peter said unto Him, Lord, whither goest Thou?*" Christ had just said to His disciples, in Peter's presence, "Whither I go, ye cannot come," and previously he had heard Him refer to His departure from the world. Peter evidently did not exactly understand what the departure meant, and he inquires, "*Whither goest Thou?*" Thou sayest Thou art going to leave us; the idea of Thy departure distresses me; tell me whither Thou art going. Evidently he had no clear conception of what the departure of Christ really meant. He ought to have known. Frequently had he heard his Master say that He was going to leave them and return unto His Father. But his Jewish prejudices had blinded his mind on the subject.

Secondly: The response was significant. It indicated—(1.) Christ's voluntariness. "*Whither I go;*" not "*Whither I am driven.*" To preach Christ as a *Victim*, is not to preach the Gospel; it is to misrepresent, to blaspheme Him. He was the sublimest moral Hero. Not a poor *Victim*, but a *Mighty Victor*. Goethe has said somewhere, that evangelical preachers *trade* in those physical sufferings of Christ from which the Sun veiled itself. He came into the world of His own independent choice; He walked it with a free step; and He left it of His own accord, and in His own way. "I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again." The response indicates—(2.) Christ's wisdom. "*Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards.*" Christ does not answer Peter's question, does not tell him distinctly where He is going to, does not satisfy his curiosity, but rather checks his impetuosity, and says, "*Thou canst not follow Me now.*" Peter's faith and hope are appealed to here. (1.) His faith. "*Thou canst not follow Me now.*" I do not tell thee why; but trust Me. There were reasons, no doubt, why Peter could not. (a) He was not fully prepared to go into the other world with Christ. There was considerable discipline of soul required in him yet. (β) He had much to do in the world before he could leave it. He had to bear witness to Christ, not only to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles. He had to preach at Jerusalem, and at Antioch, &c. There is a good reason for keeping good men

in the world. "I pray not Thou shouldest take them out of the world," &c. Christ appeals to—(2.) His hope. "*Thou shalt follow Me afterwards.*" A few years afterwards Peter did follow his Master, followed Him probably in the very mode of his death, followed Him into one of the mansions or abodes which Christ prepared for His people in the heavenly world. Do not be discouraged, "*thou shalt follow Me.*" "Where I am, thou shalt be also." If we are genuine disciples, though we cannot enter heaven now, we shall. Let us take hope. Notice—

II.—PETER'S IMPULSE AND CHRIST'S CORRECTION.

First: Peter's impulse. "*Peter said unto Him, Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake.*" As if he had said, "I walked with Thee upon the waters, I ascended with Thee the Mount of Transfiguration, why cannot I follow Thee now? Why? Is there danger? I will brave it. Is there death? I will face it." No doubt his love was genuine as well as strong.

Secondly: Christ's correction. "*Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice.*" Observe here—(1.) Peter's self-ignorance. Instead of doing this, thou wilt not even acknowledge Me. How ignorant are we of our own hearts! "Is thy servant a dog?" &c. Lay down thy life for Me, indeed! In two or three hours hence, in the break of morning, before the cock has crowed, announcing the first beam of day, thou wilt have "*denied Me thrice.*" (2.) Christ's foreknowledge. What Christ now foresaw actually occurred. (See Matt. xxvi. 69—75; Mark xiv. 66—72; Luke xvii. 55—62; John xviii. 16—18, 25—27.) This warning seems to have hushed Peter into silence, for he does not seem to have spoken once during the whole of the long subsequent discourse.

CONCLUSION. Let us not speculate about the Divine procedure, but rather trust in the Divine character, and hope in the Divine promise. Let us be cautious of our best impulses, and trust not even to our own hearts, but practically live the prayer, "Create in us clean hearts, O God, and renew a right spirit within us."

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